



Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services

Key Considerations Checklist

Victim-centered responses and services are vital to the safety, stability, and healing of crime victims, as their use can ultimately reduce and prevent future victimization. The U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) launched the Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services & Technical Assistance Program (LEV Program) in 2018. The goal was to support law enforcement-based victim services program development in the United States, strengthen their capacity, and support partnerships with community-based programs. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) serves as the training and technical assistance provider for the LEV Program. In this role, the IACP aims to enhance the capacity of law enforcement-based victim services by providing guidance on promising practices and policies to support victims’ access to their legal rights and the services and responses they need.

As a companion to this document, [Establishing or Enhancing Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – What Are the Key Considerations?](#) provides guidance around key topics for starting or enhancing law enforcement-based victim services programs. Victim services can be provided in a variety of ways, and each agency should take into account agency and community cultures, values, goals, service needs, and mandated responsibilities per state law or tribal code (related to concerns of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of minors and older or vulnerable adults). Though each agency’s or tribe’s needs may differ, standardization of common practices in victim services is needed. This checklist should be used to prompt conversations and decisions about victim services program development.

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Key Considerations Checklist	
Victims’ Rights	
Does your state or tribe have a statute, tribal code, or constitutional amendment related to victims’ rights?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, are you knowledgeable about this statute, tribal code, or amendment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there general state or tribal provisions that apply to all victims (e.g., a general right to privacy)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you know which rights automatically protect victims and which must be requested by victims?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have practices in place to help victims request access to specific rights?	<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 or tribal code to distribute victims’ rights information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do law enforcement personnel discuss rights with victims (beyond handing out pre-printed information?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If not, are there other personnel assigned to have a full discussion with victims about their rights and how to exercise them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Key Considerations Checklist

Advocacy Parameters

Models of Service Provision

What model of service provision is used?¹

	Law enforcement-based victims services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Hybrid community-based victim services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Community-based victim services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Span of Responsibility

How are victim services personnel expected to provide services?

	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
	On-call response? If yes, by phone or in the field?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

What factors have been considered when determining how victim services personnel will provide services?

	Lengthy travel time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Intermittent or insufficient phone or internet services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Minimal transportation options?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Equipment and technology availability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Is there a specific time frame for victim services personnel to make initial contact with victims (e.g., within 48 hours, the business day after the report was received, dependent on crime type and lethality factors)?

Yes No

Are victim services personnel expected to serve more than one law enforcement agency or jurisdiction?

Yes No

If so, are formal agreements (e.g., MOUs) in place?

Yes 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 (e.g., suicide, traffic fatalities, family disputes that are not deemed criminal)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Victims who reside outside of the jurisdiction?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	For tribal agencies, tribal members residing off the reservation or out of the local area?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	For tribal agencies, non-tribal members residing on the reservation or in the local area?	<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
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¹ For more information about models of service provision, see [Establishing or Enhancing Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Advocacy Parameters](#).

	Chaplain or spiritual programs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Mental health/substance use co-response personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Personnel assigned to conduct outreach to identified populations (e.g., community members experiencing homelessness, schools)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>Victim Intersection Points</i>		
Have victim services personnel worked with other agency divisions to promote victim-centered response throughout a victim's interaction with the agency (e.g., through cross-training or joint policy development), including during—		
	Initial contact (e.g., 911 calls, walk-in reporting)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Investigative interviews (e.g., using soft interview rooms)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Evidence collection (e.g., obtaining photographs of injuries)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Property return (e.g., returning property to the family of a homicide victim)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Records requests (e.g., victims requesting copies of police reports)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Media involvement (e.g., agency press releases or conferences)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have all personnel (both sworn and professional staff) received training on—		
	Victim services role?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Victim-centered, trauma-informed practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Cultural responsiveness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>Personnel Hiring and Selection</i>		
	Have interview questions been modified for victim services personnel applicants?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are questions regarding applicant cultural responsiveness included in the interviews?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are there practices in place to recruit well-qualified victim services personnel reflective of the communities they serve (e.g., tribal members, people of color, people of all gender identities)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are professionals familiar with the role of victim services included on the interview panel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Will the agency consider applicant experience in lieu of training or education?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do job duties align with education and training required for this role?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have background checks been completed for victim services applicants to access law enforcement records upon employment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have victim services personnel completed required training for access to law enforcement and court records (e.g., National Crime Information Center [NCIC], Criminal Justice Information Services [CJIS])?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have selection processes been established for student interns and volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Has the distinction between the role of law enforcement-based victim services and use of professional licensure (e.g., social work, mental health practitioner) been discussed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<i>Reporting Structure and Supervision Practices</i>		
Who will be the direct supervisor of victim services personnel?		
	Does that person have authority to make victim services program decisions (e.g., to establish new victim services policies, to seek funding to hire additional victim services personnel)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Does that person have training, experience, or understanding of the role of victim services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Does that person have training or experience regarding the cultural norms and practices of the community?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Does that person have training on victim-centered, trauma-informed practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Does that person also supervise other units or personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there policies in place when victim services personnel report to supervisors with previously established relationships (e.g., relatives, friends)?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What are the management and supervision expectations for victim services personnel?		
	Are victim services personnel expected to manage a program and provide direct services to victims?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are victim services personnel expected to expand the program (e.g., serve additional crime types, build a student intern or volunteer program)?	<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
	Are these expectations consistent with expectations of other agency staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How are supervision practices for victim services personnel structured?		
	Are there regular opportunities for discussions about job responsibilities, program growth, professional development, and performance standards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are there opportunities for supervision beyond incidents and crisis circumstances?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the victim services supervisor have the required credentials and experience to supervise student interns (e.g., master's degree in social work)?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>Ethical Approaches</i>		
Do all agency personnel understand that the primary role and responsibility of victim services personnel is to serve in the interest of the victim?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do victim services personnel understand the difference between advocacy and activism?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do victim services personnel understand the requirements and limitations of confidentiality related to their communication with victims?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do victim services personnel understand their mandated reporting obligations per state law or tribal code (related to concerns of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of minors and older or vulnerable adults)?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do victim services personnel understand when and how to support the use of accommodations to meet victim needs (e.g., interpreters for victims with language access needs, assistive technology and services for victims with intellectual and developmental disabilities, adaptation of spaces for victims with physical disabilities)?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have cultural responsiveness standards been established?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do cultural responsiveness standards include requirements for initial and ongoing training?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Have clear expectations been set for access to and sharing of restricted criminal justice records for—		
	Other government agencies (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, probation and parole, Child and Adult Protective Services)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Community organizations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Victims, witnesses, survivors, and co-victims?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Members of the public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have policies for victim services personnel been developed?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do policies incorporate cultural considerations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have policies been established for referrals to other service providers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have policies been established for data collection (e.g., identifying what data victim services personnel will track, where this data will be stored)?	<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
<i>Professional Wellness</i>		
Do victim services personnel understand the components and importance of professional wellness?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel encouraged to practice professional wellness through—		
	Agency-supported sources (e.g., employee assistance programs, peer support, wellness program activities, annual leave)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Self-initiated activities (e.g., time with friends and family, exercise, hobbies, adequate sleep)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Key Considerations Checklist

Documentation Standards²

Location

Can victim services personnel document 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 victim services documentation?	<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, are victim services personnel trained on how this disclosure should be handled and documented?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the prosecuting attorney’s office, tribal prosecutor, or U.S. attorney’s office in the agency’s jurisdiction been consulted to review documentation policies?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is appropriate language being used in documentation (i.e., victim-centered, inclusive language)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do victim services supervisors routinely review and provide feedback on victim services personnel’s documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Access

If victim services personnel are employed by a law enforcement agency—	
Do victim services personnel explain to victims the potentially wide access to documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have policies been established to address victim safety concerns related to documentation and information disclosure (e.g., redaction)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If victim services personnel are employed by a community-based organization—	
Are they following their employing organization’s guidelines for access to documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they explain these guidelines to victims?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they understand that documentation may not be accessible outside the community-based organization, including to law enforcement and that it will not be included in the criminal investigation (unless ordered by a court)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Legal Intersections

Do victim services personnel understand legal intersections between their documentation and—	
<i>Brady v. Maryland</i> ³ ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (e.g., documenting victims’ self-reported diagnosis information that may be sensitive and/or protected)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

² Victim services personnel’s documentation is the written record of service provision and contact with a victim (e.g., in person, by email, or phone). Capturing audio, video, or photographs of interactions with victims or other activities that are investigative in nature are outside the scope of the role of victim services personnel and should not occur. Documentation is different from data tracking, which involves statistics of service provision (e.g., number of victims served, number of referrals provided). Documentation and data tracking are separate but complementary program activities.

³ The U.S. Supreme Court ruling *Brady v. Maryland* dictates what information and records must be shared between prosecution and defense during discovery and disclosure processes. As law enforcement-based victim services personnel are employed by law enforcement agencies, they are considered state actors and are likely subject to Brady disclosures. See National Crime Victim Law Institute’s [Law Enforcement-Associated Victim Advocates and Brady Disclosures: Legal Background and Considerations](#) for additional information.

	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and records requests?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have policies been developed and victim services personnel received training related to these legal intersections?		
	<i>Brady v. Maryland?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	HIPAA (e.g., documenting victims' self-reported diagnosis information that may be sensitive and/or protected)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	FERPA?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Title IX?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	FOIA and records requests?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have policies been developed to notify victims of practices for releasing information (e.g., media requests, FOIA requests, trial-related discovery)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do these policies include victim notification each time a request for information is received?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Subpoenas		
	Have victim services personnel received training on the process for responding to subpoenas?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do victim services personnel understand the difference between fact and expert witnesses?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have victim services personnel received training on providing court testimony?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Complex Documentation		
	Are processes for filing complaints (against sworn or victim services personnel) publicly posted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are victim services personnel familiar with supervisory structure and complaint or grievance processes for—	
	Officers, investigators, and other law enforcement personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Victim services personnel (within the agency and in other organizations)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Prosecutors, defense attorneys, and court staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Forensic nurses and other involved professionals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Is there a statewide or tribal victims' rights compliance or enforcement system that victims can access?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Key Considerations Checklist

Effective Partnerships

Internal

Has cross-training occurred between victim services personnel and—

	Patrol officers and investigators?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Dispatch and communications personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Records personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Crime scene personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Public Information Officer (PIO)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has cross-training occurred with patrol officers, investigators, sworn supervisors, and victim services personnel for on-scene response?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are patrol officers, investigators, 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 personnel of other disciplines and divisions when developing policies?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have formal agreements (e.g., standard operating procedures) been established for internal partnerships?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

External

Have partnerships been established with other agencies and organizations that help meet victims' needs?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have formal agreements (e.g., MOUs, cooperative working agreements) been established for those partnerships?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services – Key Considerations Checklist

Agency Incorporation of Victim Services

Strategic Planning

Has a strategic plan been developed specifically for the victim services program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there a process in place to regularly review, track progress, and update the victim services strategic plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Budget Process

Have costs associated with victim services personnel (e.g., salary, benefits, equipment, training) been incorporated into the agency budget process?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Crisis Response Plans

Are victim services personnel incorporated into larger agency crisis response plans (e.g., mass casualty response plans)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel knowledgeable of cultural considerations relevant to crisis response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel involved in agency cross-training for crisis response plans?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are victim services personnel familiar with incident command policies and practices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Workplace Culture Change

Have steps been taken to foster victim-centered, trauma-informed workplace culture within the agency?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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