



## **Victim Services Programs**

### **Core Service Definitions**

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## **Core Services Overview**

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) strives to be a responsible and exemplary steward of federal funds. In an effort to ensure that limited federal resources pay for basic services for all crime victims in Georgia, CJCC created the core service definitions for various types of programs that the agency typically funds with victim services grant funds.

These standards are based on extant program models across the state and should be revised as the response to victimization evolves and improves. The core service definitions outline the basic level of services agencies of various types should provide to be considered for CJCC Victim Services grant funds. The types of programs defined herein include: Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Child Advocacy Centers (CAC), Counseling Services, Domestic Violence Shelter & Non-Shelter Programs, Legal Service Programs, Sexual Assault Centers, and Victim Witness Assistance Programs (VWAP).

These core service definitions are also the basis for any programmatic desk audits or site visits. CJCC grant monitoring staff will have a checklist based on these core service definitions to ensure programs are providing a minimum level of services with CJCC funds.

## Child Advocacy Center (CAC)

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council requires that any child advocacy center funded with VOCA, VAWA, or SASP funds must provide the following basic services and meet the following criteria:

- Provide counseling for child abuse victims – either in-house or through a linkage agreement
- Provide referral services to necessary social services
- Be a member of a multi-disciplinary team comprised of law enforcement, prosecution, victim advocates, medical, and child welfare officials
- Notify and assist the victim about his/her eligibility for victim's compensation
- Advocate on the child's behalf for services and expedite case processing
- Review a child's court case(s)
- Track the child's case to ensure that the child is not lost in the criminal justice or other government system(s)
- Provide services to non-offending caregivers and other secondary victims of child abuse
- Provide training to other officials such as law enforcement, prosecutors and judges about the effects child abuse and negligence and strategies for effectively handling such cases
- Obtain a Memorandum of Understanding with agencies with which they partner on the multi-disciplinary team as applicable
- Ensure that all services are available for persons with limited English proficiency or provide referrals for culturally and linguistically services where appropriate
- Advocate staff must have at least 40 hours of initial training specific to providing direct victim services either through the Office for Victims of Crime, Victim's Assistance Training Online, the National Organization for Victim's Assistance (NOVA) or other body that provides training specific to serving crime victims

## **Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**

Based on the statutorily mandated minimum standards, best practices in Georgia and nationally, and on training requirements, CJCC defines CASA programs as follows:

- All CASA volunteers must complete at least 30 hours of training before serving in court; additionally, CASA volunteers must complete 12 hours per year of continuing education
- CJCC-funded CASA programs must be affiliates of the state umbrella agency – Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates (GACASA) – and members of the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association
- Conduct independent investigations of a child’s case – which may include interviewing the parties in the case, the child’s family, and any social agency employees who work with the child
- Maintain regular contact with the child at least once per month
- Provide written reports to the court for each scheduled hearing
- Advocate on the child’s behalf to have court hearings scheduled so the case can be resolved
- Advocate for judicial review of a child’s case
- Attend at all court hearings about the child’s case
- Work with all parties involved in a deprivation proceeding
- Review court documents pertaining to the child’s case
- Refer, as appropriate and necessary, to other social service agencies
- Notify and assist the victim about his/her eligibility for victim’s compensation
- Ensure that all services are available for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or provide referrals for culturally and linguistically appropriate services as needed
- Advocate staff must have at least 40 hours of initial training specific to providing direct victim services either through the Office for Victims of Crime, Victim’s Assistance Training Online, the National Organization for Victim’s Assistance (NOVA) or other body that provides training specific to serving crime victims

## Counseling Services

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council outlines specific requirements for programs providing **therapy or counseling services** in-house or via contract with a **licensed** counselor/therapist:

- The in-house or contract counselor or therapist must have a **Georgia-specific** license.
- If the in-house or contract therapist uses interns or license-eligible therapists to supervise group therapy sessions or provide individual therapy, that person(s) must be supervised by a **Georgia-licensed** therapist or counselor.
- All counselors or therapists must conduct an intake and needs assessment that must include an assessment for acute mental illness, trauma or substance abuse prior to treating any patient. The therapist or counselor should have an up-to-date referral list for patients that he/she cannot treat because their needs are beyond the scope of the therapist's expertise.
- The organization or contract therapist should have a protocol to ensure that therapy services are available to persons with specific cultural needs and/or physical/mental disability needs. Such a protocol may include a referral list for cultural or language appropriate therapy services.
- Any in-house or contract therapy provider or counselor must attend at least **5 hours** of continuing education per year related to treating or serving crime victims. If the agency provides services via contract with an outside provider, the training requirement must be stipulated in the contract and proof that the contractor has met the annual requirement should be on file with the contracting agency.

### **Specific requirements for programs providing peer support groups:**

- The person leading any peer support group must receive training specific to leading such support groups.
- Persons leading support groups must receive at least **5 hours** of continuing education per year related to providing services to crime victims.
- Any support group should have a baseline curriculum with specific goals and objectives toward which members are working. Such a curriculum should be clearly defined, but flexible enough to accommodate the specific needs of various groups.
- Organizations providing support groups should have a protocol to make accommodations to meet the needs of individuals with specific cultural needs and/or physical/mental disability needs. Such a protocol may include a referral list for culturally or language appropriate peer support group services.
- Notifying and assisting the victim about his/her eligibility for victim's compensation
- **Any provider who is only providing peer support groups may not advertise that they offer "therapy or counseling services"** per O.C.G.A. § 43-10A.

## Victim Witness Assistance Programs

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council requires that victim witness assistance program funded with VOCA, VAWA, or SASP funds must provide the following services below. Georgia's Association of Chiefs of Police and Georgia's Prosecuting Attorneys Council have model policies and minimum service requirements for law enforcement and prosecutor's agencies, respectively (Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, 2009; Georgia Prosecuting Attorney Council, 2006). The policies and minimum services are based in part on the Crime Victims Bill of Rights. CJCC recommends the following core service definitions for Law Enforcement VWAPs and Prosecutors VWAPs as the minimum requirement, since these are necessary to enforcing the basic rights outlined in the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights:

### **Law Enforcement VWAP:**

- Educate the victim about his or her role in the criminal justice process and provide a summary of follow-up actions the agency will take
- Notify and assisting the victim about his/her eligibility for victim's compensation
- Notify the victim about victim services within the area
- Provide the victim with contact information for case updates and follow-up, upon the victim's request, and if applicable
- Notify the victim about the status of temporary protective orders and their eligibility to apply for such orders
- Advocate on the victim's behalf with the Sheriff's office or Police Department, or provide training to law enforcement agencies, to ensure that the victim's information is taken so he/she can be notified of the defendant's status – e.g. of arrest, of release from incarceration or on bond, and/or of potential bond conditions
- Make all services available to victims with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Advocate staff must have at least 40 hours of training specific to providing direct victim services either through the Office for Victims of Crime, Victim's Assistance Training Online, the National Organization for Victim's Assistance (NOVA) or other body that provides training specific to serving crime victims

### **Prosecutor VWAP<sup>1</sup>:**

- Assist victims with recovering any property taken as evidence or recovered by the police
- Provide referral services to agencies that can provide counseling or other social services the victim might need
- Notify and assist the victim about his/her eligibility for victim's compensation
- Assist victims with obtaining restitution from the accused
- Assist victims with filing a victim impact statement
- Notify victims of any court hearings at which they must or might want to be present
- Educate the victim about his or her role in the criminal justice process
- Notify the victim about any proceeding at which the release of the accused will be considered and provide the victim with the opportunity to express his/her opinion regarding potential release
- If the accused is found guilty and sentenced to jail, connect the victim with the victim services division in the corrections department and assist the victim with registering for offender status notifications

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<sup>1</sup> CJCC currently funds one nonprofit agency that conducts a VWAP in a prosecutor's office. This agency is required to provide the Prosecutor VWAP core services.

- Advise the victim about his/her right to wait during judicial proceedings in an area separate from the accused
- Serve as the liaison between the victim and the prosecutor assigned to the case
- Provide support to the victim during trial process, in meetings with prosecutor, and at court hearings
- Have a written plan to be ready to provide services to victims who are Limited English Proficient
- Advocate staff must have at least 40 hours of training specific to providing direct victim services either through the Office for Victims of Crime, Victim's Assistance Training Online, the National Organization for Victim's Assistance (NOVA) or other body that provides training specific to serving crime victims

## Domestic Violence Programs

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) funds two types of domestic violence agencies, community-based non-shelter program, and shelter-based domestic violence programs. Below is a list of basic services any domestic violence programs funded with VOCA, VAWA, or SASP funds must provide:

- **Non-Shelter, Community-based agencies:**
  - New direct service volunteers must have at least 10 hours of training
  - New staff members who will be providing victim services must have at least 40 hours of initial training prior to allowing them to serve victims unsupervised
  - Refer to the statewide or national domestic violence hotline provided in the agency's outgoing voicemail for any victim calling after normal business hours
  - Refer to and help with obtaining emergency or safe shelter for victims who qualify and are eligible
  - Refer to services that meet the needs of children who witness or are victims of domestic violence, if the agency does not have a program for child victims
  - Provide or have partnership to provide peer support groups run by a facilitator who is trained to run domestic violence support groups
  - Refer to therapy or counseling by a licensed professional counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist
  - Assist or have partnerships that assist with filing petitions for temporary protective orders, immigration filings where appropriate, and court accompaniment to hearings
  - Refer to legal help or advocacy related to other civil, criminal or immigration matters where a licensed attorney is required
  - Notify and assist the victim about his/her eligibility for victim's compensation
  - Advocate with social service providers such as TANF agencies, unemployment offices etc.
  - Assist victims with finding permanent or transitional housing or referral to agencies that specialize in these services
  - Inform and refer victims to proper parenting without the use of violence
    - If the agency provides parenting classes in-house, a model or set curriculum should be followed.
  - Provide follow-up services when the client consents to be contacted and it is safe to do so
  - Conduct community outreach and awareness about the effects of domestic violence
  - Have a written, publicized policy that the agency serves all victims of domestic violence regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, or immigration status
  - Have a written plan to provide services available to Limited English Proficient victims
  - Conduct a written or verbal, standardized dangerousness and/or lethality assessment that is consistently administered to all clients along with safety planning
- **Shelter-Based Programs**
  - Provide all the services mentioned for non-shelter, community-based agencies above
  - Provide staff 24-hours per day 7 days per week, including holidays, to admit victims into the shelter
  - Be able to ensure any victim contacting the shelter is placed in safe, emergency housing, including:
    - Housing the victim in your shelter;
    - Calling other organizations or shelters for the victim to be placed



- Providing funds for a victim to stay in a hotel, if necessary
- Have shelter accommodations sufficient to house dependent children of the victims seeking their services
- Provide services to help victims with dependent children make arrangements with their child's school and other social services
- Maintain an updated shelter bed availability count in the DHS database
- Assist with making transportation arrangements for victims who cannot get to the shelter, court hearings etc.

## Legal Services Providers

Legal Services Providers funded with VOCA, VAWA, or SASP funds must provide the following services. Because some of those activities would overlap with the work of Victim Witness Assistance Programs, CJCC narrowly defines Legal Services and makes the following distinction between legal **advocacy** and legal **services**:

### **Legal Advocacy:**

- Legal Advocacy services may not require the assistance of an attorney barred under the State of Georgia;
- Lay advocates must be trained to assist victims with filing temporary protection orders. Such advocates must be specifically trained and certified to provide such assistance. Acceptable training includes the VAWA-funded Georgia Legal Services Temporary Protective Order training, or other training as approved by CJCC;
- Legal Advocacy thus includes:
  - Assistance with filing the Georgia Crime Victim's Compensation Program
  - Assistance filing a temporary protective order
  - Accompanying the victim to a first appearance and subsequent hearings
  - Assisting the victim with contacting an offender's probation or parole officer – particularly with respect to TPO violations
  - Assisting the victim with advocating for no contact constraints or stay away bond conditions
  - Assisting the victim with obtaining a warrant for an offender's arrest
  - Referring the victim to legal counsel with respect to custody, or divorce or immigration matters
  - Educating the victim about his/her role in the criminal justice process
  - Assistance with and coordination with attorneys or Board of Immigration Appeals-certified advocate for filing T- or U-Visa paperwork, or a VAWA self-petition
  - Outreach to underserved communities to identify potential victims of crime and provide services
  - Ensure that all services are available for persons with limited English proficiency or provide referrals for culturally and linguistically services where appropriate

### **Legal Services:**

- Legal services require assistance from a state barred attorney, or in the case of immigration law, a Board of Immigration Appeals-accredited representative
- Both VOCA and VAWA allow legal services that help ensure the victim's immediate safety
- Legal Services include:
  - Assistance with completing and filing a T- or U-Visa paperwork, or VAWA self-petition on a victim's behalf;
  - Legal immigration counsel and/or representation with remedies under the Violence Against Women Act and/or The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act before USCIS; ICE; Immigration Court
  - Assistance with divorce or custody legal filings and appearing on the victim's behalf in court
  - Assistance with eviction proceedings, if the eviction results from the victimization

- Assistance with filing contempt petitions when a temporary protection order is violated and representation at 2<sup>nd</sup> TPO hearings
- Drafting demand letters or lawsuits on behalf of victims of financial abuse or fraud to restore lost property
- Outreach to underserved communities to identify potential victims of crime and provide services
- Ensure that all services are available for persons with limited English proficiency or provide referrals for culturally and linguistically services where appropriate

## Sexual Assault Programs

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council requires that any sexual assault center funded with VOCA, VAWA, or SASP funds must provide the basic services below:

- Prior to being allowed unsupervised contact with clients, sexual assault center staff must complete 24 hours of training. Staff must maintain their advocacy skills with 10 hours of continuing education per year.
- Prior to being allowed unsupervised contact with clients, volunteers must complete 10 hours of training. Volunteers must maintain their service skills with 10 hours of continuing education per year.
- Advocate staff must have at least 40 hours of initial training specific to providing direct victim services either through the Office for Victims of Crime, Victim's Assistance Training Online, the National Organization for Victim's Assistance (NOVA) or other body that provides training specific to serving crime victims
- Staff a 24/7 crisis hotline
- Provide referrals to and assistance with obtaining social or legal services, where applicable
- Notify and assist the victim about his/her eligibility for victim's compensation
- Accompaniment to medical evaluations, and with client consent or at his/her request, to police interviews, and court hearings
- In-house provision or referral for licensed counseling and/or support groups run by a trained facilitator as requested or necessary
- Conduct community education and awareness activities to educate the public about the impact of sexual assault, including outreach about available services to victims and criminal justice professionals
- Participation on Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs), if any exist in the center's community
- Ensure that all services are available for persons with limited English proficiency or provide referrals for culturally and linguistically services where appropriate