Chapter 5 Policies and Procedures

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1. **Guidelines for service delivery**:

Service delivery is provision of services to crime victims. Policies must describe the procedures and requirements for the and administration of services such as counseling, legal services, sheltering/housing, therapy, etc. Policies must also include the procedures and requirements for providing client assistance.
~Policy must describe and address service standards.

2. **Client confidentiality & security of confidential information:**
   This requirement applies to grantees who provide victim services. It does not apply to law enforcement, prosecutors, courts or victim witness coordinators.
   Policy must include:
   ~How the organization will protect clients' confidentiality and the responsibility of staff, volunteers, and board members to protect client confidentiality;
   ~How the organization secures victim records and who has access to the client records;
   ~The requirement that confidentiality statements must be signed by all staff, volunteers, interns, board members;
   ~For more information review the chapter on confidentiality.
3. **Informed consent & release of client information:**
   This requirement applies to grantees who provide victim services. It does not apply to law enforcement, prosecutors, courts or victim witness coordinators
   Policy must include:
   ~The use of a release of information form for the organization to obtain consent from victims to release their information.
   For more information review the chapter on releases.

4. **Breach of personally identifying information:**
   ~Requirement to report an actual or imminent breach of personally identifiable information (PII) to the assigned grant coordinator, the grant administrator or to an OJP program manager **no later than 24 hours** after an occurrence of an actual breach, or the detection of an imminent breach.

5. **Volunteer policies/manual & volunteer tracking form:**
   All recipients of **VOCA fund**s are required to have at least 1 **direct service** volunteer for 1 hour for each grant year. Contact your grant manager if you need assistance volunteer use or if a waiver is needed
   Policies and procedures must include:
   ~How your organization recruits, selects, screens, trains and supervises volunteers
   ~How volunteer hours are documented; your **volunteer tracking form** should include: volunteer name and signature, date and number of hours volunteered, and a brief description of the volunteer work. Optional items on the checklist are check box for direct or services and a total line to tabulate hours.
   ~How **volunteer files** are maintained to include: job description, application or resume, reference checks, signed confidentiality form, background check showing child abuse and criminal background checks for volunteers providing direct services, training (if applicable), volunteer evaluations (if applicable), signed sexual harassment policy, driving record check and proof of liability insurance if transporting clients

6. **Grievance policy and procedures (including alleged civil rights violations):**
   Policy and procedures must include:
   ~How **victims**, **employees**, and **volunteers** file grievances or complaints regarding potential

violations of a victim service program's service standards, contractual stipulations and /or certified assurances.
~The stipulation that if someone is filing a complaint about a grant funded activity, they use the online complaint form.
~Complainants must also be informed they may file complaints with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, or with the Office of Civil Rights:

U.S. Department of Justice,
Office of Justice Programs
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
810 7th Street NW
Washington, DC 20531

~The procedures for filing discrimination complaints are to include the following: (1) a process for accepting and investigating complaints within the organization (2) process for referring the complaint to an appropriate investigating entity (the referral organization should be identified in the policy and/or procedure) in the event that the grantee does not have the capacity to investigate discrimination complaints; (3) Notice to employees that they may also refer program participants to the OCR, The Attorney General's Office or Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) in the event that the program participant does not want to file directly with the organization/grantee and (4) Contact information for the aforementioned agencies (OCR, Iowa AG or ICRC) should be included in procedure/policy.

7. **Nondiscrimination policy:**
   Policy and procedures must include:
   ~Notification to employees, and program participants that the organization does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex disability, or age; that it does not retaliate against a person who files a discrimination complaint or lawsuit, who complains about discrimination; or who participates in a discrimination proceeding, such as being a witness in a complaint investigation or lawsuit.
   ~Written policies and procedures advising how to file complaints or allegations of discrimination must be given to employees and clients.
   ~Grievance procedures that incorporate due process standards and provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging a violation of the DOJ regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, found at 28 C.F.R. Part 42 G, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment practices and the delivery of services.
   ~*Designation of responsible employee.* A recipient employing fifty or more persons and receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of $25,000 or more shall designate at least one person to coordinate compliance with this subpart.
   ~All clients, customers, program participants, employees, job applicants, or consumers of the Victim Assistance Section or their grantees have the right to participate in programs and activities operated by the Victim Assistance Section or its grantees regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability. In addition, recipients of Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.
   ~Adverse findings of a civil rights complaint must be sent to the assigned grant coordinator in the Victim Assistance Section.
   ~Notification services must be provided regardless of religious beliefs.
   ~If an **organization conducts explicitly religious activities**, that organization must have a mechanism in place to notify program participants that it does not: (1) discriminate on the basis of religion in the delivery of services. This can be part of the intake packet, on a brochure, on an organization's website, etc.; (2) will make reasonable efforts to refer clients who object to the religious character of an organization to another agency for similar services and keep a record of the requests for an alternate provider; and (3) If the organization has hiring practices favoring co-religionists, they should have sent a Certificate of Exemption to the assigned grant coordinator in the Victim Assistance Section.

8. **Drug-free workplace**:
   Direct recipients of federal funding must have a drug-free workplace policy and procedures which include:

~Publishing a statement that notifies employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace and those actions will be taken against employees for violation of the prohibition
~Discourages alcohol and drug abuse and encourages treatment
~Acknowledges that drug and alcohol dependencies are health problems and encourages those with alcohol and drug abuse issues to seek treatment
~A drug-free awareness program
~Requires employees to notify the organization in writing of a criminal drug statute conviction occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after conviction **and** requires the organization to inform the assigned grant coordinator within 10 calendar days after the conviction of an employee of the organization, of such conviction
~Specify actions the organization can take with an employee who has received a criminal drug statute conviction
For more information on the federal requirements of a drug free workplace, click here. This requirement does not apply to grantees who do not receive funds directly from the federal government.

9. **Non-Violence in the workplace:**
   All grantees must have a non-violence in the workplace policy and procedures which includes:
   ~A statement proclaiming the organization will maintain a workplace environment free from threats and acts of violence
   ~A lists of prohibited behaviors, such as: causing physical injury to another person; acting in an aggressive or hostile manner that creates fear of injury to someone; intentionally damaging property of the organization or of another employee; possessing a weapon during grant-related activities (not applicable to law enforcement).
   ~How someone reports workplace violence, and if the report can be made anonymously
   ~What steps are taken to address reports of workplace violence

10. **Policy banning employees, contractors/subcontractors and volunteers from texting while driving:**
    All grantees must have an on-the-job policy banning employees, contractors/subcontractors and volunteers from texting while driving an organization-owned, rented or personally owned vehicle. The policy should also include workplace safety information and other awareness activities to decrease crashes caused by distracted driving.

11. **Policy requiring employees, contractors/subcontractors and volunteers requiring the use of seatbelts:**
    All grantees must have an on-the-job seatbelt policy which requires employees, volunteers and contractors to use their seatbelts when driving or riding in an organization-owned, rented or personally owned vehicles.

12. **Records retention:**
    All grantees must have a record retention policy to include:
    ~How long all closed and inactive client files shall be retained
    ~How closed and inactive files are destroyed
    ~How long financial and program records and supporting documents concerning grant funded projects shall be retained
    ~Who has access to grant-related books, documents, papers or other records associated with grant funding
    For retention requirements, see chapter three.

13. **Nepotism:**
    All grantees must have a policy addressing hiring relatives of an employee or board member.

14. **Conflict of Interest**:
    All grantees must have a conflict of interest policy which includes:

~An explanation, or definition of what qualifies as a conflict of interest such as “a transaction or arrangement that could benefit an officer, director, or employee”
~Prohibition of actions that might result in, or create the appearance of conflict of interest, such as: using an

official position for private gain or giving preferential treatment to any person
~ The requirement board members and staff are to be excused from voting or participating in workplace decisions when a conflict or an appearance of a conflict exists
For information on conflict of interest see chapter one.

15. **Lobbying activities (restriction of):**
    All grantees must have a policy on lobbying. Lobbying is prohibited with federal funds. Information on lobbying can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations and from the IRS.

16. **Tracking, retention and depreciation of inventory, equipment and property:**
    All grantees must have a policy on tracking equipment and property. Organizations should have a policy and procedures to track and record all equipment regardless of the funding source. See chapter three for more information.

17. **Accounting policies:**
    All grantees must have accounting policies regarding allocation methodologies, the receipt and disbursement of funds, purchasing and payment of expenditures and the requirement of appropriate segregation of duties. Additionally, the policies should include how the organization separates and accounts for each funding source (no co-mingling of funds) to include the procedure for depositing revenue into accounts based on funding sources; the role of a payroll service if appropriate, use of an auditor, and the requirement to submit the agency audit to the Victim Assistance Section. See chapter three for more on financial management.
18. **Purchasing:**
    All grantees must have policies and procedures on purchasing. See chapter three. For more information on purchasing.

19. **Travel**
    All grantees must have policies addressing in state and out of state travel for staff and volunteers when providing services and when traveling to trainings, conferences or meetings, See chapter See: https://das.iowa.gov/state-employees/state-accounting/travel-relocation/210-travel for the State of Iowa travel rules.

20. **Client Assistance:**
    Grantees who provide client assistance must have a policy describing in detail how client assistance is distributed.

21. **Gift Card:**
    Grantees who use gift cards must have a policy describing who is authorized to purchase gift cards, how gift cards are logged (with or without a client number), stored and inventoried, who has access to them, and the process for distributing them.

22. **Language access plan:**
    Grantees must have written procedures that outline the organization's policies and procedures for ensuring victims have access to necessary forms of communication, both written and verbal.

23. **Determination of suitability to interact with participating minors:**
    The recipient, and any grantee at any tier, must **make determinations of suitability before certain individuals may interact with participating minors**. This requirement applies regardless of an individual's employment status. One of the special conditions included in all certified assurances is the determination of suitability to interact with participating minors. In summary, your agency must determine if covered individuals are suitable to interact with participating minors. See OVW award condition document. **This document provides the definition of this award condition, clarification , resources and additional information regarding working with minors.**

24. **Employment eligibility verification for hiring under the award:**
    Grantees must have policies and procedures in place to verify employment eligibility consistent with 8 U.S.C. 1324a(a)(1). Organizations can verify employment by using E Verify provided an appropriate person authorized to act on behalf of the grantee uses E-Verify (and follows the proper E-Verify procedures, including in the event of a "Tentative Nonconfirmation" or a "Final Nonconfirmation") to confirm employment eligibility for each hiring for a position in the United States that is or will be

funded (in whole or in part) with award funds.

25. **Sexual harassment and the response to workplace-related incidents of sexual misconduct:**
A sexual harassment policy is required for all grantees to include sexual harassment can include:
~Offensive remarks about a person's sex, gender, gender presentation, or sexual orientation
~Ongoing comments or teasing of a sexual nature that make someone uncomfortable
~Unwelcome sexual advances
~Making sexual favors a condition of employment, promotion, or work assignment ("quid pro quo" harassment)
~Touching another person in a sexual way
~Exposing someone to sexually explicit materials without their consent
The policy also needs to include:
~The process for filing a grievance of sexual harassment by an employee, client, victim, volunteer or board member
~What the process for filing a grievance looks like when the alleged perpetrator is a supervisor, administrator or director
~The requirement for current and new staff and volunteers to sign an acknowledgement form that they have reviewed and understand the sexual harassment policy

26. OVW funded grantees (STOP VAWA and SASP) must adhere to the policy for response to workplace-related incidents of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and dating violence. For OVW grant funded activities, this policy must address the following:

1) allegations of workplace-related incidents of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and dating violence by an employee, volunteer, consultant, or contractor;

2) workplace supports for employees, volunteers, consultants, or contractors who are victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or dating violence; and

3) adjudications that will result in an employee, volunteer, contractor, or consultant being prohibited from occupying positions that could undermine the ability of the recipient or grantee to carry out the grant funded project, such as positions working with victims and other vulnerable populations. A policy may provide that certain adjudications do not prohibit an individual from occupying such a position but must include standards for granting such an exemption for an individual.

27. Whistleblower Policy – reporting fraud, waste and abuse and similar misconduct

Grantees must have policies and procedures which describe how they will promptly refer to the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) any credible evidence that a principal, employee, agent, grantee, contractor, subcontractor, or other person has submitted a claim which violates the False Claims Act, committed a criminal or civil violation of laws pertaining to fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity or similar misconduct. The policies must also include whistleblower protections. \

28. Cost allocation Policy –

Grantees must have a policy documenting their methodology for allocating shared expenses between funding sources. Here is a example of a policy.

Requirements and Best Practices

Organizational Requirements and Best Practices

Non Profit Board of Directors

In a non-profit agency, the governing board is a board of directors whose main function is to establish policies, regulations and bylaws consistent with the purposes of the agency. The board is responsible, also, for resolving management issues, selecting and evaluating the performance of the executive director, and functioning in an advisory capacity to the executive director.

Equal Employment Opportunity Plans - **Annually** all organizations receiving Department of Justice funding are required to complete and file either an *EEO Plan and Utilization Report* or file the *Verification of EEOP Reporting Requirement* form using the online EEO Reporting system. For more information on EEOP requirements specific to your organization and to access the reporting tool, go to the Civil Rights EEOP website. Once you have complied with the EEOP requirement, you will need to upload documentation into Iowa Department of Justice Grants. Here are the instructions.

Civil Rights Training Certification- One person from each grant funded organization (the person who is designated the civil rights liaison or similar) must complete Civil Rights Training each grant cycle. The completed Civil Rights Training Certification form is to be uploaded into Iowa Department of Justice Grants on the organizational details page in the organizational profile. This is the link to the training videos.

Staff Vacancies

Grant funded vacancies should be reported to the assigned grant coordinator within 30 days of the vacancy. Once the vacant position(s) is filled the grantee MUST update the budget details form by submitting a name change request. Here are the instructions.

Time and Activity Records

Grant funded personnel must track their time and activities. This is done by using time tracking software or by keeping an activity log. Personnel costs charged to grants must be for actual time spent on allowable grant activities. Do not use estimates, proration or costs based on the grant budget. If personnel costs benefit more than one grant, costs must be allocated appropriately. At minimum time and activity documents must include:

- Date (day, month and year)
- Employee's name
- Position title
- Total daily hours charged to the project
- Activities related to the project
- Employee's signature
- Project director or supervisor's signature
- Funding source (Federal grant # when applicable)

*One-time salary supplements or bonuses, including severance provisions, may not be paid with federal and/or state funds.

Personnel Files Requirements

Staff and direct service volunteers should have personnel files which include the following:

- Documentation of verified character/employment references if conducted
- An agency application or resume'
- A signed release of information granting the organization permission to obtain a background check and to conduct reference checks

- Job description
- Documentation of training/certification received such as the topic, presenter, length of training, dates.
- Documentation of minimum job qualifications if not evident from application or resume
- Documentation of background checks according to agency policy
- Other personnel records or documents which align with agency policy, such as employee evaluation, disciplinary actions, awards, achievements, etc.

Iowa Department of Justice Grant Management System PROFILE Pages

Organizations with active grants are responsible for keeping contact and other data in their Iowa DOJ profile pages updated. Changes to contact information, such as emails, addresses, key personnel, etc., must be updated immediately.

Job Descriptions

If not included in an employee handbook, organizations are to have written qualifications and job descriptions for each position. This ensures people hired are qualified and have the required education or experience. Job descriptions are to be as detailed as possible. The Section reviews job descriptions to compare how written job descriptions match what is provided in the grant applications and to ensure job tasks align with allowable grant activities. For example, if an organization requests 100% of an advocate's time charged as direct services the job description cannot include tasks which are not direct service tasks, such as fundraising.

Employee Handbook

An employee handbook is a vital document that outlines an organization's policies, procedures, culture, and code of conduct to ensure consistency and transparency. It acts as a guide for employees regarding their rights and responsibilities, while protecting employers from potential legal risks, such as wrongful termination or discrimination claims.

Key purposes of an employee handbook include:

- **Setting Expectations:** Defines behavior, performance standards, and workplace rules, including dress code, time-off, and safety procedures.
- **Legal Protection:** Helps defend the company against employment-related lawsuits by providing a written record of compliance with laws and company policies.
- **Communication of Culture:** Communicates the company's mission, values, and vision to new hires and existing employees.
- **Consistency:** Ensures management applies policies uniformly across the organization, promoting fairness.
- **Onboarding Tool:** Serves as a primary resource for new employees to understand company benefits, policies, and procedures.

An effective handbook is generally acknowledged in writing by employees to confirm they have received and understood the policies.

As part of your site monitoring, the Section's grant compliance coordinators may request to review your entire employee handbook or select certain portions to review. Employee handbooks should include the following:

1. Work expectations – hours, conditions, remote, in office, parking, dress code
2. Pay and benefits – pay and paid time off, holidays, vacations, sick leave, and other leave time, overtime, hazard pay (if applicable), post employment payouts describing how accrued paid time off is handled when employees leave, are laid off or terminated
3. Termination – include voluntary and involuntary termination
4. Supervision of staff
5. Time and activity tracking – employees must understand how to track and report their time if they are paid from multiple sources to alleviate duplication of pay
6. How to file complaints or grievances –
7. Training requirements or expectations
8. Background checks there must be a policy and or procedures in place to ensure compliance with all state and federal background requirements. At a minimum, this policy must include which agency positions require a background check and the type of check performed. Grantees must have written

policies and procedures to address and define infrequent and occasional contact between adults and minors.
9. Adherence to state or federal laws such as texting and driving, seatbelt requirements.
10. Requirements for driving - such as insurance and driving record check

Here is a sample employee handbook you can download and edit for your organization.

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