



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ATTORNEY GENERAL
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Statewide Telephone/Crisis Text Hotline Requirements

All statewide hotlines and crisis text services that provide comprehensive crisis counseling, support and referral services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and other crimes in Iowa must abide by the following standards:

- Be provided in a static location, not from mobile phones or an alternative location, such as a staff person's or volunteer's home.
- Be able to move from chat conversation to telephone conversation as requested by caller.
- Be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with the capacity to handle roll over calls from victim service programs choosing to forward their local hotlines after hours and on weekends.
- All hotline and crisis text/chat staff must receive a criminal history background check. Criminal history guidelines that would exclude a candidate from successful employment will be per the agency's written policies and procedures.
- Have written policies and procedures that guide the following services:
 - Crisis response to assess the caller for safety and provide any crisis counseling to address the immediate crisis. The nature of the crisis and goals of the call are determined by the caller and can include the after effects or long-term consequences of previous intimate partner abuse.
 - Information and referral to the victim service and/or other program(s) in their area to receive services. The advocates providing hotline services will have access to resources statewide to provide the most comprehensive referrals.
 - Confidentiality to ensure confidential communications exist between the victim counselor and the client. The policy should include procedures and provisions for the release of information, response to subpoenas, and exceptions required by law and must be in compliance with the guidelines as demonstrated in the Iowa Code. To safeguard confidentiality and anonymity, crisis lines may not use caller I.D. capabilities. Blocked calls and collect calls (including those from correctional institutions) must be accepted.
 - Connecting victims to local service provider through a direct call connection, rather than merely providing the number, whenever possible.
 - [Additional written policies and procedures as outlined in CVAD's Chapter II. Section Required Policies and Procedures.](#)
- Accessibility that addresses compliance with all federal and state statutes prohibiting discrimination including the Americans with Disabilities Act – (42 U.S.C.S. § 12101, et seq.) and the Rehabilitation Act – (29U.S.C.S. § 794)
- Accommodate individuals with hearing disabilities through a video phone, and/or a relay service.
- Provide meaningful no-cost access to certified translation or interpretation to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Presidential Executive Order 13160). Have a written language access policy that outlines procedures for ensuring victims have access to necessary forms of communication, both written and verbal.
- Be able to dispose of client-related data and information and the technologies used in a manner that facilitates protection from unauthorized access and accounts for safe and appropriate disposal.
- Crisis/Chat line [staff must abide by Advocate Certification and Training Requirements in Chapter VI.](#)

Phone call data: The data collected should be securely stored in house. The information is owned by the program, not by an outside entity.

Database: The program used should meet Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD) standards and meet

the reporting requirements of the grantor, without disclosing personal identifying information.

Phone System and Tertiary Technology: Must have a phone system and computer equipment to successfully handle a statewide crisis line. This includes:

- Individual phone system with the ability to direct connect to peer programs
- Phone Hardware: including phones, phone system hardware and computer server to run phone software (Voice server, IP system, switches)
- Accessory items: rack mounts, cables
- Phone software including licenses, upgrades
- Server software including operating system, virus protection, and networking tools.
- Primary Rate Interface (PRI) phone system with multiple incoming and outgoing lines. PRI allows for 23 incoming and outgoing calls at one time.
- Voice over Internet (VoIP) phone system with analog line back up in case of power outages.
- Internet bandwidth to support multiple phone calls and internet activity. This will be determined by the program's technology/internet provider.
- Visual screen interface with call queue.
- Computers: each advocate should have access to a computer while on duty, to monitor the call queue and perform administrative duties.
- Computer software: Each computer should have basic software to perform daily tasks (MS Office, database), including virus software for security purposes.

