



Program Standards

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Project Overview

The following standards were revised the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault and reviewed by the Advisory Council in 2017. Standards were compiled from member agency policies in an effort to promote uniformity, statewide, of direct services and related administrative functions.

Our goal is to ensure that each client has access to the same level of services they need regardless of geographic location. This process will also serve to assure that victims receiving services in rape crisis programs and the employees of these programs are afforded basic rights and that programs provide services in an ethically responsible manner. Member agencies are encouraged to review standards and make adjustments as needed to be in compliance.

Code of Ethics

The primary obligation, as a service provider, is the welfare of the victims of sexual assault, their family and friends.

Services and assistance will be provided with compassion and respect to the dignity of all people regardless of cultural heritage, religion, status, age, disability, sex, or sexual orientation.

Clients' rights to privacy and confidentiality will be respected and protected, subject only to laws or regulations requiring disclosure of information to appropriate other sources.

Services offered will be based on client assessments and will be evaluated on a continuing basis to guide service delivery.

Referrals to other resources or services will be made if the client's needs do not fall within the scope of the agency and/or when it is in the client's best interest.

Throughout the client/agency relationship, the services provider will foster maximum self-determination on the part of the client.

The relationship between the client and the service provider will be kept at a professional level in order to eliminate risking possible exploitation of the knowledge and trust derived from the professional relationship.

All advocates, whether paid staff or volunteers, working with clients will have the necessary training, supervision, resources and support needed in their effort to assist clients.

Service providers' personal and professional development will be encouraged and supported.

The Standards of Service set forth by the ACASA Board of Directors will be implemented and followed.

Program Standards Implementation Process

I. Accountability

Rape crisis programs are accountable to the population served and the ACASA Program Standards requirements. The Advisory Board will oversee the program standards. ACASA will keep a program file for each program with all standards documents and correspondence for a period of three calendar years.

II. Roles of the Advisory Council

The Advisory Council will review the program standards annually and make recommendations for revisions.

III. Site Visits

Site Visits to each program will be conducted annually for the purpose of reviewing compliance and offering technical assistance with Program Standards. ACASA will conduct the Site Visits.

ACASA will give a program at least 30 days' notice prior to the visit. Notification will be sent to the Executive Director of the program. Site visits will be completed within one day.

IV. Preparing Programs for Compliance

To prepare a program for compliance a checklist will be provided to programs in preparation of site visit to describe what is required. In addition, ACASA will be available for providing technical assistance to programs.

V. Notices of Non-Compliance

Category I- Emergency (Immediately to five business days)

- Program Facility
- Confidentiality
- Hotline
- Program Operations

If the Site Visit/complaint reveals that any condition in this category places the victim in immediate danger:

- a. ACASA will provide the program with immediate verbal notification of non-compliance. Written notification will also be sent to the program's executive director.
- b. These conditions of non-compliance or complaint shall be corrected within the Category I time frame (immediate to 5 days) to show to be unfounded.
- c. If the program fails to reach full compliance within the specified time, ACASA will send a certified correspondence to the Executive Director-and program's Board Chairperson advising that the program's Organizational membership will be moved to Provisional status.

Category II - Non Emergency (Ten calendar days)

Personnel Development
Board of Directors
Fiscal Management
Peer Support Groups
Volunteer Project Requirements
Case Management
Public Awareness

If the Site Visit/complaint reveals that any condition places the program in Category II non-compliance:

- a. ACASA will provide the program with immediate verbal notification of non-compliance/complaint. Written notification will also be sent to the program's executive director.
- b. The program must respond to non-compliance/complaint within the Category II time frame (10 days) to provide documentation to show to be unfounded or a plan for corrective action within a reasonable time frame.
- c. At the end of that time period if the program has not confirmed that corrective action has been completed, the issue will be reviewed by the Standards Committee.

- d. If the program fails to reach full compliance within the specified time, ACASA will send a certified correspondence to the Executive Director and the program's Board Chairperson advising that the program's Organizational membership will be moved to Provisional status.

VI. Repeated Non-Compliance

A program may be put on Probationary Status if the program falls out of compliance three (3) times during a three (3) month period or two (2) times during a three (3) month period for the same offense. A program put on probation remains on probation for three (3) months.

If a program in Probationary Status has an additional incident of non-compliance within the three (3) month period, the program may be put on Provisional Status by the Standards Committee and will not receive funds for any quarter in which they are in Provisional Status.

Disagreement with the requirements themselves cannot be cause for grievance. ACASA site visitor will determine if the program meets ACASA's Program Standards. If the reviewed program is dissatisfied with this determination, the following process must be followed:

- a. A letter outlining the dissatisfactions should be submitted to ACASA's Executive Director. This letter should be submitted five working days of non-compliance for Category I Requirements and within ten working days for Category II Requirements. Within twenty working days of receipt of a complaint, ACASA will set a meeting to determine solution.
- b. If not resolved using the process above, and the program wishes to continue the grievance, a letter of complaint should be sent to the President of the Board of ACASA dated no later than ten working days following the receipt of the reply from ACASA's executive director. Following the receipt of the letter of complaint, the President of the Board will meet with representatives of the agency within twenty working days. They will make recommendations to the agency. The governing Board of ACASA will make the final decision.

VII. Status Definitions

Organizational Status is available to those organizations which operate as autonomous, independent programs within the state of Arkansas and meet the ACASA Program Standards.

Provisional Status refers to an organization, which is a sexual assault program that does not meet Program Standards and/or the criteria for Organizational Status. Once a program in Provisional Status is in compliance with Program and Fiscal Standards guidelines they are eligible for Organizational Status.

Probationary Status refers to a program that falls out of compliance three (3) times during a three (3) month period for any reason or two (2) times during a three (3) month period for the same offense (e.g., non-compliance related to hotline services). A program put on probation remains on probation for three (3) months. If a program on Probationary Status has an additional incident of non-compliance within the three (3) month period, the program may be put on Provisional Status by ACASA. A program in Probationary Status is not eligible to apply for Sexual Assault Services Program funding.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors that is a legally constituted group of individuals whose function is to oversee operations of the sexual assault programs and related services shall govern Rape Crisis Centers. The Board of Directors' basic responsibilities are as follows:

Board Orientation

The board members will be oriented to the organization, including the organization's mission, bylaws, policies and programs as well as their roles, responsibilities, liabilities and accountability as board members and the dynamics of sexual assault within six (6) months after joining the board and a signed letter of commitment to the program.

Meetings

The board will meet according to its bylaws and keep minutes of each meeting.

Determine the Organization's Mission and Purpose

A statement of mission and purposes should articulate the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served. It is the Board of Directors' responsibility to create the mission statement and review it annually for accuracy and validity. The Board's role is to effectively monitor which programs are the most consistent with the organization's mission and to monitor its effectiveness.

Select the Executive Director

Boards must reach a consensus on the chief executive's job description and undertake a careful search process to find the most qualified individual for the position. The Board should provide the chief executive with the support, resources needed and participation in board meetings to further the goals of the organization and evaluate the chief executive's job performance at least annually.

Ensure Effective Organizational Planning

As stewards of an organization, boards must participate in an overall planning process and assist in implementing the plan's goals.

Manage Resources Effectively

The Board, in order to remain accountable to its donors, the public, and to safeguard its tax-exempt status, must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.

Serve as a Court of Appeal

The board shall serve as a court of appeals in personnel matters following the grievance procedures.

Monitor, Create, and Approve Policy

The Board shall create, approve, review and/or monitor the use of agency policies. The Board shall ensure that the organization has the following policies:

- Personnel Policy and Code of Ethics
- Grievance Policy for Personnel
- Grievance Policy for Clients
- Fiscal Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Confidentiality Policy for Clients, Board and Staff
- Bylaws

Documentation of completed orientation will be maintained for each Board Member and included in their Board file.

Fiscal Management

Sexual Assault Programs are responsible to provide sound financial management of the program and to maintain appropriate documentation thereof.

Programs must be a private, non-profit agency, with the agency's 501(c) (3) letter or equivalent available for review.

Programs shall have written and implemented policies and procedures for the handling of monies within the organization. The information gathered by these Policies must be made available to the ACASA subsequent to a Fiscal Management Standards Complaint. Policies shall address, but are not limited to:

- methods of internal control for the organization, to include procedures for adequate controls and segregation of duties;
- general ledger and financial statements;
- financial reports;
- recording of all transactions;
- reimbursed staff expenses;
- cash receipts;
- cash disbursements;
- deposits;
- bank reconciliation;
- payroll;
- grant reporting;
- property and equipment;
- annual budget;
- annual audit;
- annual report to Secretary of State;
- annual report to the Attorney General;
- tax filings;
- Board oversight of the program's financial aspects.

Personnel Policies

Each program will have written and implemented Personnel Policies that reflect sound employment and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and other applicable laws and regulations.

Monitoring Provisions for Personnel Policies

A comprehensive manual containing all personnel policies will be maintained, kept current, and made available to all staff. Each new employee shall receive written notification of terms of employment that will include:

- job title
- job description
- rate of pay
- date of employment
- fringe benefits
- probation period

Each program's Personnel Policies Manual will include a policy on non-discriminatory employment practices and will indicate compliance with all applicable Federal guidelines.

Each program's Personnel Policies shall include the following:

- affirmative action considerations for staff;
- employment classifications;
- orientation, transfer, promotion and staff development;
- payroll and scheduling;
- employee benefits;
- vacation, sick leave, compensation time;
- leaves of absences;
- rules of conduct;
- disciplinary outline;
- supervision of staff;

- work performance evaluations;
- employee grievances;
- lay-off and termination of staff;
- sexual harassment;
- provisions for conducting criminal background checks;
- provisions for conducting Central Registry Checks for child abuse history;
- an active client or resident shall not be hired as direct service staff;
- Fair Labor Standards and Wage and Hour guidelines shall be followed for all paid staff;
- Provisions for random drug tests if required by circumstances.

Each program shall have personnel records to include:

- resume/application for employment;
- verification of training and experience;
- salary information;
- annual work performance evaluations;
- documentation of disciplinary actions;
- job description;
- attendance records;
- training hours completed;
- confidentiality agreement signed by employee;
- copy of current driver's license or state or federal identification;
- current automobile liability insurance if applicable;
- employee eligibility verification form (I9);
- Signed verification form for random drug tests if required by circumstances;
- Signed receipt of personnel policy.

Certification Process for Staff

All staff who supervise, coordinate and/or provide direct services to victims are asked to complete 5 hours of shadowing by a trained advocate prior to unsupervised service provision to clients. New staff must also attend sixteen (16) hour ACASA provided Basic Advocacy training and ACASA Online Basic Advocacy Modules within the first nine months of employment.

All staff who provide direct services to victims will attend eight (8) hours of continuing education each calendar year. The training topics must be related to job responsibilities. Continuing education not provided by ACASA shall be approved by the programs executive director. They must receive hours (1) hour of ACASA approved ethics training every two (2) years.

Documentation of completed training will be maintained for each employee and included in their personnel file.

Monitoring Provisions for Use of Direct Service Volunteers

Sexual Assault programs may use unpaid volunteers to augment the program's direct and indirect services provided by paid staff.

Programs shall have written policies and procedures regarding the recruitment, screening, training, supervision and/or dismissal of volunteers used to provide both direct and indirect services. Such policies will clarify the roles and contributions of volunteers to the program's provision of service, with specific details addressing how, when, where, and the frequency with which volunteers will be used.

There shall be written job descriptions for each volunteer position that follows the format of job descriptions for staff members. Job descriptions are to be provided to volunteers upon acceptance in the program.

Programs shall maintain a file on each direct service volunteer that shall include, but are not limited to the following information:

- Application/resume;
- References;
- Job description;
- Time sheets;
- Financial reimbursement forms;
- Training verification forms;
- An annual evaluation;
- Minimum training records;
- Valid driver's license and auto insurance, if appropriate;
- Central Registry check;
- Background check;

- Signed Confidentiality statement;

Certification Process for Volunteers

All volunteers who provide direct services to victims are asked to complete 5 hours of shadowing by a trained advocate prior to unsupervised service provision to clients. New volunteers must also attend sixteen (16) hour ACASA approved Basic Advocacy training and ACASA online Basic Advocacy modules within the year of employment.

All volunteers who provide direct services to victims will attend eight (8) hours of continuing education each calendar year. The training topics must be related to job responsibilities. Continuing education not provided by ACASA shall be approved by the programs executive director. They must receive hours (1) hour of ACASA approved ethics training every two (2) years.

Documentation of completed training will be maintained for each volunteer and included in their volunteer file.

Sexual Assault Advocate Training

Subject	Minimum Training Time
Overview of Agency and Agency Information	45 Minutes
Dynamics of Sexual Assault and Rape Culture	1 Hour 30 Minutes
Dynamics of Domestic Violence	1 Hour 30 Minutes
Police Response and Investigation of Rape Case	1 Hour
Criminal Justice Process	1 Hour
Role of an Advocate (DVD)	45 Minutes
Medical Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical facility protocol for treating rape victims • explanation of rape kit and exam • medical treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, emergency contraceptives, pregnancy 	1 Hour
Child Abuse	1 Hour
Crime Victims Reparation	15 Minutes
Neurobiology of Trauma	1 Hour 30 Minutes
Ethics	1 Hour
Specific Populations (i.e., Under the influence of drugs, alcohol, date rape drugs, elderly, adolescents, non-offending parents, males, lesbians, adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, religious and cultural issues, marital, non-stranger, disabled.)	1 Hour
Crisis Intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate responses vs. inappropriate responses • Active listening • Problems interacting with clients • Role play • Hotline Calls 	1 Hour 30 Minutes
Self-Care	1 Hour
Self- Guided Reading and Online Modules	4 Hours

Confidentiality

Each program will regard all information obtained about individual clients, whether it is written, verbal or observed, in a manner that maintains confidentiality and in accordance with applicable laws and professional ethics regarding confidentiality.

Programs must have written policies and procedures to ensure that all services provided are recorded in written form and that those records are maintained in a manner that protects the confidentiality and privacy rights of individuals, groups and/or families receiving services.

Written records of services provided in individual, group and/or family settings must be maintained by a program in a secure, locked storage area that is accessible only to paid staff employed to provide direct services, authorized volunteers, and administrative or executive staff responsible for supervision and /or internal review of service records.

No file or information from the client file will be released to another individual or agency not authorized to receive it without the written, informed consent of the client or their legal guardian.

A client may give their consent for releasing information by completing a written release of information.

No information in a client file that is provided by an agency outside of the program should be released to a third party.

Staff, volunteers, board members, and students or other providers will sign confidentiality agreements.

Hotline

Crisis intervention, information and referral provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on a telephone line answered by qualified trained staff or volunteer and will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and other applicable laws and regulations.

A hotline operated by a sexual assault program must provide 24-hour crisis telephone access to the program.

The hotline shall be listed in a local telephone book and widely distributed or be available from local telephone information services in the community where the program is located.

To insure 24-hour hotline accessibility, programs shall have a minimum of two telephone lines, one of which is the hotline. Call waiting is allowed.

The hotline shall be answered by a program staff member or volunteer who has had sexual assault crisis intervention training.

A Program cannot rely on a call back system for answering the hotline. Once safety is addressed the advocate may need to confer with, refer or transfer caller to another advocate to address the callers' specific needs. Random monitoring calls will be conducted to ensure that the hotline is operational and answered by a trained staff or volunteer. Program Directors may conduct random mock calls to their own program to ensure quality assurance.

Programs offering hotline services must make reasonable efforts to provide emergency telephone crisis intervention and advocacy. Advocates may need to give victims information concerning limitations to services in the area so that they can make an informed decision. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Assessment of the caller's critical needs;
- Crisis intervention;
- Safety planning;
- Information and referral to community resources based on availability;
- Emergency shelter access and/or referral if applicable.

Programs shall make arrangements and institute procedures for telephone backup, or secondary systems to insure 24-hour hotline coverage and quality assurance. Staff responsible for backup hotline coverage must be trained in sexual assault crisis intervention and must have access to a complete list of community resources. Backup hotline coverage arrangements may include call forwarding.

Those trained individuals providing coverage of a program's hotline must be prepared and equipped to respond directly or by referral to callers with special needs, such as individuals with disabilities, those who cannot speak English, etc.

Service Provision

Services are tangible, goal-directed interactions, advocacy and assistance provided to a client or victim, short and long-term resources and safety plans, and the provision of facilitation and communication support to assist those in need of services from multiple service providers. Services are provided primarily in a face-to-face setting, and may include telephone contact by qualified, trained staff or volunteers. All assistance will be provided in a way that will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Violence Against Women Act and other applicable laws and regulations.

After safety has been established, the identification of needed services with the individual by an advocate providing services will facilitate service delivery and referrals and encourage ongoing communication with the providers of additional services that may include, but are not limited to:

- Short-term, transitional and/or permanent housing;
- Medical, nutritional and/or health services;
- Law enforcement assistance;
- Legal services;
- Public assistance services, including job training and support services;
- Child care services and parenting education;
- Child protection services;
- Alcohol and drug evaluation and education;
- Alcohol or substance abuse treatment services;
- Services for persons with disabilities;
- Transportation assistance;
- Counseling services;
- Rehabilitation, employment readiness services and/or job training;
- Translation services and/or immigration assistance;
- Crime Reparations Act assistance;
- Other related services as needed;
- Plan for client to review file shall be in place.

A data collection and record-keeping system shall be developed that allows for the efficient retrieval of data needed to measure the rape crisis program's performance in relationship to its stated goals, objectives and funds received for services.

Reporting Requirement

Each program will submit a report of designated data, which reflects an overview of persons assisted by their program to ACASA annually.

In addition to submission of data, programs shall submit status changes and training for Staff and volunteer to ACASA quarterly.

Accreditation Checklist

SUBGRANT ORGANIZATION		DATE			ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY (NAME/TITLE):
A. DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW					
		YES	NO	N/A	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
1	Articles of Incorporation				
2	By-laws				
3	List of board members				
4	Minutes of most recent board meeting				
5	Expectations of board service				
6	Confidentiality policy for board members/employees/volunteers/clients				
7	Conflict of Interest policy for board members				
8	Board approved mission and/or vision statement with Sexual Assault services focus				
9	Written policies and procedures for documenting services				
10	Policy and procedures manual for staff and/or volunteers				
11	Adherence to state and federal laws/regulations statement				
12	Record of agency audit or equivalent				
13	Employee/volunteer job descriptions				
14	Yearly employee/volunteer performance evaluations				
15	Financial policies and procedures				
16	Non-Discrimination policies for employees/volunteers/clients				
17	Training documentation for Sexual Assault employees/volunteers				
18	Training manual for Sexual Assault employees/volunteers				
19	Certified Sexual Assault Advocate certificates for employees/volunteers				
B. CRITERIA FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAM		YES	NO	N/A	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
1	Meets standards for Sexual Assault Program				
a	24-hr. hotline (365 days a year)				
b	Client resource and referral information				
c	Provides crisis intervention				
d	Safety planning				

e	Emergency accompaniment services				
	Medical Facility				
	Law enforcement department				
f	Individual support services				
g	Legal advocacy				
h	Support groups with sexual assault focus				
i	Services assessment surveys				
j	Community education				
	MOU from a police/sheriff's department in each county served				
	MOU from a medical facility in each county served				
	MOU from a prosecutor's office in each county served				
	MOU from a social services agency in each county served				
C. DUAL AGENCY		YES	NO	N/A	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
1	Separate financial budget or autonomy between domestic violence and sexual assault program				
2	Domestic violence services provided out of same location				
3	Domestic violence staff cross-trained for hotline response				
4	Domestic violence staff cross-trained on sexual assault advocacy response				
5	Dual or separate outreach material				
6	Outreach provided to non-sexual assault victims				
a	Males				
b	Children				
c	Elderly				
d	People with disabilities				
e	GLBTQI				
f	Childhood abuse victims				
D. POST ACCREDITATION		YES	NO	N/A	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
1	Accreditation panel reviewed application and site visit assessment				
2	Agency received notice of accreditation decision				
a	Accreditation				
b	Provisional Accreditation				

