

**Missouri Department of Department of
Social Services, Division of Finance and
Administrative Services, VOCA Unit**



***VOCA Code of Professional Ethics for
Subrecipient Agencies and Individual
Service Providers***

Victims of crime and the Missouri Department of Social Services expect every Subrecipient Agency and Provider, paid or volunteer to act with integrity, to treat all victims and survivors of crime-their clients-with dignity and compassion, and to uphold principles of justice for accused and accuser alike.

For these purposes, a victim service provider is defined as any individual, paid or volunteer, who works directly or indirectly with victims and survivors of crime.

To these ends, this Code will govern the conduct of Missouri Victim Service Providers and the Subrecipient Agencies:

- I. *With every victim*, the victim service provider shall:
 1. Recognize the interests of the victim as a primary responsibility;
 2. Foster maximum self-determination on behalf of the victim;
 3. Respond respectfully to each victim with personalized services;
 4. Respect and protect all applicable civil and legal rights of the victim including, but not limited to, Article I, Section 32 of the Missouri State Constitution and the Missouri Revised Statutes section, 595.209;
 5. Protect and maintain the victim's rights to privacy and confidentiality in accordance with state and federal law, funding requirements, professional licensing standards, and program policy;
 6. Refrain from behaviors that communicate:
 - a) victim blame;
 - b) suspicion regarding victims accounts of the crime;
 - c) condemnation for past behavior; or
 - d) other judgmental, anti-victim sentiment.
 7. Respond to the victim's stated needs without regard to personal convictions and within the rules of the victim service provider's host agency;
 8. Adhere to legal, ethical, and behavioral standards of conduct, avoiding impropriety and the appearance of impropriety, or engaging in any conduct that would adversely affect his or her ability to provide services;
 9. Assist victims in identifying and accessing resources, as needed; and
 10. Not discriminate against any victim or deny services to any victim based on the victim's race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, sex, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, social class, ability, economic status, education, marital status, immigration status, religion, substance abuse, health status or HIV status.

- II. *With colleagues, other professionals, and the public*, the victim service provider shall:
 1. Act in a way that promotes mutual respect, dignity, and improvement of service;
 2. Communicate in an ethical and constructive manner;
 3. Encourage proficiency and excellence in victim assistance among colleagues (paid and volunteer) and allied professionals;
 4. Provide professional support, guidance, and assistance to victim service providers who are new to the field in order to promote consistent quality and professionalism in victim services;
 5. Seek to ensure that volunteers in victim service programs have access to the training, supervision resources, and support required to enhance their efforts to assist clients; and

6. Not discriminate against any employee, colleague, or allied professional on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, sex, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, social class, ability, economic status, education, marital status, religion, substance abuse, health status or HIV status.

III. *In her or his professional conduct*, the victim service provider shall:

1. Maintain high personal and professional standards and competence in the delivery of services;
2. Maintain a high level of skill in the delivery of services;
3. Continue to improve upon their skills and professional knowledge;
4. Maintain client confidentiality in accordance with state and federal law, funding requirements, professional licensing standards and program policy unless clear permission has been given or legal requirements permit the victim service provider to do otherwise;
5. Represent their organization's policies and procedures in accordance with federal and state law without imposing and/or stating one's personal views and biases;
6. Accurately represent his/her professional title, qualifications, and/or credentials;
7. Not use her or his official position to secure gifts, monetary rewards, or special privileges or advantages; and
8. Know and uphold the ethical standards and legal requirements of the profession which she or he is a member (when applicable).