

IOWA ORGANIZATION FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE - CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

IOVA - CP

A professional organization for front line victim service providers in the State of Iowa dedicated to ensuring that all crime victims receive quality services.

2004

MISSION STATEMENT:

“To ensure that victims of crime receive quality support and services from all service providers.”

This project was developed in conjunction with the Iowa Working Group for the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium. This group later became IOVA’s subcommittee for the development of this project.

Members of the subcommittee include:

Candis Lockard - Iowa Attorney General’s Office
Cathy Vincent - Story County Attorney’s Office
Chris Taylor - Black Hawk County Attorney’s Office
Connie Haughey - Tama County Attorney’s Office
Cristy Hamblin - Cedar Rapids Police Department
Emily Blomme - Survivors of Homicide Victims’ Program
Julie Homb - Dubuque County Attorney’s Office
Kirsten Faisal - Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Kris Rowley - Dickinson County Attorney’s Office
Leigh Ebbesmeyer - Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Leonard Fuller - Fort Dodge Domestic/Sexual Assault Crisis Center
Linda Sorenson - 6th Judicial District Department of Correctional Services
Mike Quinn - Iowa Law Enforcement Academy
Ruth Engelbart - Warren County Attorney’s Office
Sally Marten - Scott County Attorney’s Office
Toni Liedtke - Linn County Attorney’s Office
Trisha Conrad - Iowa Law Enforcement Academy

These individuals and their offices donated and volunteered their time to ensure that this project never lost sight of the goal, assisting victims of crime.

National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium Consultants:

Dr. Dana DeHart - University of South Carolina
Janis Harris-Lord - Victim Services Consultant
Barbara Pardiso - Colorado Organization of Victim Service Providers

The National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium project was funded through a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice

Other Consultants:

Shari Konarske - U.S. Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Iowa
Jayne Crisp - South Carolina Victim Assistance Standards and Certification Board

IOVA-CP

This **voluntary** program is open to anyone providing direct services to crime victims. The project encourages training and networking and sets ethical standards. These objectives help achieve the mission of assisting victims of crime through quality services. Through this project individual service providers receive recognition from IOVA that they have met the minimum requirements as set out by IOVA-CP. This signifies that they have met the minimum educational and experiential requirements and have recommendations from their employers that they comport themselves professionally.

HISTORY OF IOVA-CP

Professionalizing the victim service field is the outgrowth of the national crime victims' rights movement that started in the 1970s. Increased public awareness of victim issues has led to the expectation not only that services will be provided, but that *quality* services will be provided. Services must benefit the victim, which means that providers must offer appropriate support, referrals, information, and assistance to victims of crime. Higher expectations for those who work with crime victims and the need for expanded victim services lead to recent efforts to professionalize the victim service field across the United States.

In Iowa, there had been an increase in the number of Victim Witness Coordinators (VWCs) working in County Attorney's offices in Iowa and in other service agencies, such as those working in law enforcement, corrections, and homicide survivor programs. A group of victim service providers from all disciplines met to develop a system for professional development for service providers in Iowa. The Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) and the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) collaborated and shared their experiences in developing their programs. The National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (Consortium) also assisted the group. The University of South Carolina (USC) had been awarded a grant to study, evaluate, and make recommendations on how to professionalize the victim service field. USC brought together a cross section of experts in the victim service field to examine the barriers and the benefits of creating standards for victim service providers. This core group became the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (Consortium).

On January 23, 2002, members of the Consortium, including Janis Harris-Lord, Barbara Paradiso, and Dr. Dana DeHart, conducted a day long workshop. Victim Witness Coordinators, homicide survivor advocates, and victim advocates working in corrections and law enforcement attended. ICASA and ICADV presented information on their programs. Dr. Dana DeHart wrote the "Summary Report" for the workshop, and set a plan for action, including the formation of a working group.

The first working group meeting took place in June 2002. The group established goals of creating a code of ethics and training standards that are the building blocks for the certification program. After many meetings discussing what the project would look like, developing a mission statement, objectives and goals, on March 7, 2003, the Iowa working group approached the Iowa Organization for Victim Assistance (IOVA) and asked that the project be incorporated into their organization. The IOVA board unanimously voted to take on the project.

On November 1, 2003, the first group of Victim Service Providers will receive certification from the IOVA-CP. The first bi-annual training is planned for the fall of 2004.

BENEFITS OF IOVA-CP

- Service Providers will be able to provide better quality of services and support to crime victims and their families
- Recognition as a professional in the victim service field
- Increased credibility
- Networking & training opportunities
- IOVA Membership
- Reduced rate to bi-annual conference
- A demonstrated commitment to professional development
- Access to informational clearinghouse

IOWA ORGANIZATION FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE - CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE (IOVA-CPCC)

The certification committee is a volunteer peer review committee with representatives from all disciplines within the victim service field in Iowa. The mission of the IOVA-CPCC is to establish and promulgate rules, code of ethics, policies and procedures related to this project. Also, to assist with and promote educational and networking opportunities to individuals who assist and provide services to crime victims and their families. The IOVA-CPCC will assure applicants that quality control through certification is administered by those who have experience in the field of victim assistance and have made the effort to establish victim assistance as a profession.

The committee will be initially appointed by the IOVA's Executive Board. CPCC is made up of twelve (12) members. Four of the twelve members must be certified by IOVA-CP. Members must include the following agencies and groups:

- President of IOVA or designee
- Victim Witness Coordinator
- Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault Representative
- Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence Representative
- Homicide Survivor Advocate
- Law Enforcement Officer
- Representative from the Department of Corrections/Correctional Services
- Lay person/Victim Representative

Term lengths for committee members will be for two years with staggered terms. (Initially, half of the committee will be appointed for one year and the other half for two years.) Members who miss three meetings consecutively will be removed from the committee. The committee will replace members as terms expire or as needed. The CPCC will present the names of replacements to the the IOVA Executive Board for final approval. IOVA Executive Board may appoint additional non-voting consulting persons as necessary.

The committee will meet quarterly. Two of the quarterly meetings will be for the purpose of reviewing applications. The committee will divide into four groups of three members to review applications. Applications deadlines are April 1 and October 1. The small committees will meet within 30 days of those dates to review a fourth of the applications and make recommendations for certification.

The committee will select a chair who will be responsible for calling meetings and be the liaison to IOVA. Meetings can be called as issues arise such as ethical complaints, etc..

CERTIFICATION PROCESS - AT A GLANCE

TO RECEIVE CERTIFICATION

- Complete Application and three copies.
- Pay non-refundable application fee
- Sign Code of Ethics
- Must be working within a victim service agency, including, governmental, private non-profit
- 2 consecutive years providing **direct** services while working in a victim service agency.
- Satisfactory completed 40 hours of basic training within the previous 5 years.
- Pay certification fee, upon application approval (Includes annual IOVA membership fee)
(Recommendation: Victims of violent crimes who are applying for certification are encouraged to ensure that their own needs have been met prior to providing services to other crime victims.)

INITIAL APPLICATION

- Name
- Agency
 - *contact information
- Experience (pd or vol)
- Direct Service Checklist
- Letters of Reference
- Signed Code of Ethics
- Signed Personal Statement (on application)
- Supervisor/Board of Director's signed statement (on application)
- Training Requirement - *Documentation required*

DIRECT SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

8 of the following 16 tasks must be performed on a **regular** basis:

- | | |
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| • Court accompaniment | • Assess basic victim needs |
| • Crisis intervention | • Immediate and long term support |
| • Support group facilitation | • Case management |
| • Info and referral to other victim service agencies | • Education and risk reduction |
| • Advocacy | • Death notification |
| • Victim notification | • Victim Offender Intervention Services |
| • Victim registration | • Other direct services - <i>must be approved by certification committee</i> |
| • Assist w/VIS | |
| • Assist w/Compensation & restitution application | |

INITIAL CERTIFICATION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- 40 hours in the previous 5 years
- Basic Training should include but is not limited to:
- Diversity/Cultural Issues
- Victimization/Advocacy
- History of Victims Rights Movement
- Crime Victim Compensation
- Statutory Requirements/Criminal Justice System
- Community Reaction
- Crisis Reaction/Intervention
- Resources/Referrals
- Ethics/Responsibilities/Self Care

LETTERS OF REFERENCE

Applicants must include two letters of references from professionals with whom you work. One letter must be from a representative of the criminal justice system and one from a representative in the victim service field.

SUPERVISOR/BOD

Application must be signed by the applicants supervisor or representative from the agencies board of directors.

TO STAY CERTIFIED

- Must complete 18 hours of advanced training every year
- Must pay annual fee recertification fee of \$55.00
- Endorsement by IOVA-CP Certification Committee

REMOVAL OF CERTIFICATION

- Failure to complete application/renewal process.
- Failure to pay fees.
- Revocation of Certification by IOVA-CP Certification Committee

COMPLAINT PROCESS FOR ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

- Complainant must document concerns in writing
- Submitted to the CPCC
- CPCC reviews complaints at quarterly meetings.
- CPCC makes determination and notifies complainant & affected parties.
- CPCC can recommend:
 - *Removal of certification
 - *Deny applications
 - *Require a corrective course of action, including mentoring and monitoring compliance.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR DENIAL OF CERTIFICATION

- Appeal must be filed within 10 days of notice of decision.
- CPCC will hold a meeting w/in 30 days of notice of appeal.
- Applicant will be provided notice of meeting and given the opportunity to attend and be heard.
- CPCC will make a determination and notify the applicant.
- CPCC decision can be appealed to the IOVA Executive committee
- Decision of the IOVA Executive committee is final.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR FINDINGS OF ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

- Appeal must be filed within 10 days after applicant receives notice of decision.
- CPCC will hold a meeting w/in 30 days of notice of appeal.
- Option of attendance for:
 - Applicant/provider
 - Complainant
 - Interested parties
- CPCC will make a determination and notify the applicant.
- CPCC decision can be appealed to the IOVA Executive committee
- Decision of the IOVA Executive committee is final.

BI-ANNUAL TRAINING

- Every two years IOVA will host a training conference
- Dues from IOVA-CP will be used to fund the conference
- Attendance at this training will satisfy the annual training requirement
- Certified members of IOVA-CP will be offered a reduced conference fee
- Bi-Annual training may be co-sponsored by other victim service agencies

DISCLAIMER

IOVA-CPCC reserves the right to modify as necessary any of the rules, process, procedures or fees set out in this program at anytime.