



Policy Templates

Instructions

What are policy templates?

Policy templates are a quick, easy way for DVP-funded organizations to create new policies or revise existing policies that align with Federal Rules and State Standards. DVP and Violence Free Colorado created these templates for funded organizations to adopt without having to research model policies or best practices. They are “turn-key” and organizations can simply add their organization-specific information to make them their own. Most templates include a purpose, sample policy language, and sample protocols.

Why do policy templates exist?

As the State program authorized to establish standards for domestic violence organizations (per Colorado Revised Statute 26-7.5-104), and the State program that administers Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act funding, DVP partners with Violence Free Colorado to provide training and technical assistance focused on best practices. These policy templates are researched and grounded in non-profit management principles as well as survivor-defined advocacy and services that are accessible, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed.

What does each policy template contain?

Purpose

<STATE THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY>

- This could include the Federal Rule, State Standard, Organization requirement, best practice, etc.
- This could also include the reasons for the policy and how it advances quality work on behalf of survivors of domestic violence.

Policy - Sample Language

<POLICY STATEMENT>

- This should include what the policy is and reference additional protocol/procedures as relevant.
- Policies reflect the stance and commitment of the organization.
- Policies can be revised and may require the board of directors or other governing body review and approval, depending on the structure of the organization.
- Policies that require board (or other governing body) approval should be reviewed at least once every two years.
- The ORGANIZATION should track the dates of review/approval and can also track different versions of the policy.
- An editable version of the policy should be kept electronically by the executive director (or designee).

Version	Approved Date	Approved By	Notes
1.0	1/3/19		Template completed

Protocol - Sample Language

<HOW WILL THIS POLICY BE CARRIED OUT BY THE ORGANIZATION>

- This could include steps for implementation, procedures for employees and volunteers, or other relevant information for the policy.
- Protocols can be changed over time without Board review or approval.

In addition to Template Policies, there are also Template Handbooks available. These materials, such as the Financial Policies, Employee Handbook, Volunteer Handbook, and Shelter Guidelines, are slightly different than the Template Policies in that Template Handbooks have multiple policies and procedures included within the document.

Organizations are encouraged to review all templates. These templates have the minimum elements that meet Federal Rules and State Standards along with best practices for non-profit management and providing quality advocacy services.

How do the policy templates work?

If your organization decides to use a template, please complete the following steps:

- Replace “ORGANIZATION” with the actual name of your organization
- Replace the DVP logo with your organization logo
- Take off TEMPLATE from the header and footer
- Make sure to look carefully at any choice points included in the template (i.e., whether or not your organization provides transportation clients) and delete the option(s) that do not work for your organization
- If there are elements from your own practice that are missing from the sample language in the protocol, add it to the document
- Engage employees and volunteers in a review process and include their input in the policy language, practices, etc.
- If required by your organization, have the policy language approved by your governing body and be sure to include the date of approval in the document
- Distribute the policy to all employees and volunteers (either in hard copy or via email) - be sure to provide training on anything that is not currently in practice
- Review the policy and protocol at least once every two years to make sure that the information is still correct and relevant - document the date of the review and/or changes
- Upload the reviewed and/or updated policy and protocol into the CAFÉ and be sure to share it with DVP

Rules & Templates

Below is a list of DVP Rules with a corresponding link to a DVP template that includes the required element.

Rule #	Requirement	Name of Template(s)
12.201.2	Confidentiality Requirements	
A	Training for employees and volunteers who provide domestic violence advocacy or have access to personally-identifying client information to receive fifteen (15) or more hours of domestic violence-related training, per Section 13-90-107, C.R.S., prior to providing advocacy or having access to personally-identifying client information.	Confidentiality for Employees & Volunteers Advocate Training Policy
B	Protecting confidential client advocacy communications to minimally include maintenance and destruction of, and access to the following records by individuals qualified per Section 12.201.2, A., above unless a funded program has received express written consent of the client to release non-aggregated personally-identifying information to a third party:	Confidentiality for Employees & Volunteers
1	Client and case file records;	
2	Electronic data collection systems;	
3	Electronic client communications such as e-mail and text messages;	Electronic Communication

4	Communication logs domestic violence advocates use to communicate among each other;	Confidentiality for Employees & Volunteers
5	Domestic violence advocacy or counseling meeting notes;	
6	Client communications through an interpreter or translator; or,	
7	Any other documents or materials produced by the program containing personally identifying client information.	
C	Responding to subpoenas directing an employee or volunteer to testify or directing access to confidential client communications in B., above.	Confidentiality for Employees & Volunteers
D	Making mandatory reports of known or suspected child maltreatment in accordance with statute.	Confidentiality for Employees & Volunteers Child Maltreatment Reporting
E	Responding to the following circumstances within the confines of confidential client communications:	
1	Client request for release of information to a third party;	Confidentiality for Employees & Volunteers
2	Client medical emergencies when the client is unable to give consent for summoning emergency medical services;	Medical and Other Emergency Situations
3	Situation where a client is determined to pose a danger to self or others;	Working w Clients w Behavioral Health Concerns
4	Known or suspected client criminal activity or behavior;	Crimes and Confidentiality
5	Law enforcement request for residential facility access to serve a warrant or subpoena on a client; and,	Responding to Law Enforcement
6	Working with county and court officials, such as a guardian ad litem, when a family is involved with child protection or custody matters;	Responding to Child Maltreatment Officials
F	Establishing a separate set of confidentiality, mandatory reporting, and duty to warn parameters for employees or volunteers acting within other professional standards such as attorneys, licensed social workers or licensed or unlicensed counselors, and parameters for required disclosures of such obligations to clients.	Confidentiality for Employees & Volunteers
12.201.3	Reporting Requirements	
	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP shall submit regular reports to DVP per contract requirements to minimally include but not be limited to federally required data and data required by Section 26-7.5-104 (2) (B), C.R.S.	Data Collection
12.201.4	Fiscal Requirements	
A	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP shall demonstrate sound fiscal management as evidenced by written fiscal policies and procedures in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, approved and reviewed by the board of directors, advisory board or other governing body that demonstrate sound fiscal controls and sufficient assurances to protect against theft or embezzlement.	Financial Policies Record Retention Policy Time & Effort Reporting Timesheet Template Quarterly Time Certification
B	Funded programs shall submit an annual independent financial audit or review to DVP within three hundred sixty five (365) days of the funded program's fiscal year end.	No policy required.
12.201.5	Board of Directors, Advisory Board, or Governing Body Requirements	
A	Funded programs' boards of directors, advisory board, or other governing bodies such as a Tribal Council shall ensure that the funded	Sample Bylaws (from Nonprofit Network)

	program exercises sound ethical and legal governance and financial management.	
B	Governing bodies shall make every effort to recruit and maintain a membership that reflects the racial, ethnic, economic, and social composition of the community or region to be served, including former clients of the program and/or persons who have experienced domestic violence.	Conflict of Interest Policy & Declaration
C	For funded Tribes, the Tribal Council may serve as the governing body.	No policy required.
12.201.6	Administrative Requirements	
A	Written plan pertaining to disaster management to minimally include assurances to maintain emergency services in the event of a public health emergency or natural or environmental disasters;	Disaster Management Plan
B	Written safety policies and procedures to minimize risk to clients, employees, volunteers, and property, to minimally include responses to potential breaches of safety at each service location;	Safety Policies
C	Written policy regarding participation in lobbying, political activity, and public demonstrations that states these activities may not be paid for with DVP funding;	Participation in Lobbying, Political Activity, and Public Demonstrations
D	Satisfactory fire safety inspection report completed annually by the local fire authority for all locations where employees and volunteers provide services to clients that conforms to the fire safety standards as determined by each city, town, municipality, county or special district;	No policy required. Documentation of requirements is provided to DVP via CAFÉ or email submission.
E	Documentation of a certificate of occupancy in accordance with local zoning, if applicable;	
F	Water safety inspection documentation if water at residential facility is not from a public water source.	
12.201.7	Personnel Requirements	
A	Written personnel policies to minimally include:	
1	Ethics policy regarding employee-client relationships and professional conduct;	Employee Handbook
2	Equal employment opportunity hiring policy;	
3	Whistleblower policy;	
4	Harassment-free workplace policy;	
5	Employee grievance policy;	
6	Criminal background check policy to minimally include, but not be limited to completion of a criminal history background check and notifications of convictions that exclude candidates from hire;	Background Check Policy
7	Policy for compliance with Section 27-90-111 C.R.S., if the executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services, or designee, designates the funded program’s contract as a contract that involves direct contact with vulnerable persons;	Background Check Policy
8	Drug-free workplace; and,	Employee Handbook
9	Annual performance reviews of employees.	
B	Written job descriptions for employees funded wholly or in part by DVP to minimally include assurances that staff serving as licensed or unlicensed counselors or social workers maintain appropriate licensure as required by law, and/or registration with the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies;	DVP reviews job descriptions during application/proposal review for any position funded by DVP.

C	Current, accurate, and complete personnel records for all employees to minimally include the following documentation:	
1	Completion of 15 hours of domestic violence-specific training in accordance with Section 13-90-107 C.R.S. prior to providing advocacy or having access to personally-identifying client information;	Personnel File Requirements Checklist
2	Verification of legal status to be eligible to work in the United States;	
3	Resume or application of employment;	
4	Completion of performance reviews by direct supervisor;	
5	Current wage rate and benefits;	
6	Current, valid driver’s license and proof of insurance if using a personal or funded program-owned vehicle to conduct business; and,	
7	Completed criminal history background check prior to employment start date.	
12.201.8 Volunteer Requirements		
A	Written volunteer policies to minimally include:	
1	Ethics policy regarding volunteer-client relationships and professional conduct;	Volunteer Handbook
2	Whistleblower policy;	
3	Harassment-free volunteer environment policy;	
4	Volunteer grievance policy;	
5	Criminal background check policy to minimally include, but not be limited to completion of a criminal history background check and notifications of convictions that exclude candidates from hire;	Background Check Policy
6	Drug-free workplace; and,	Volunteer Handbook
7	Annual performance reviews of volunteers.	
B	Written volunteer job descriptions.	No policy required.
C	Current, accurate, and complete personnel records for all volunteers to minimally include the following documentation:	
1	Completion of 15 hours of domestic violence-specific training in accordance with Section 13-90-107 C.R.S. prior to providing advocacy or having access to personally-identifying client information;	Volunteer File Requirements Checklist
2	Resume or application to volunteer;	
3	Completion of performance reviews by direct supervisor;	
4	Current, valid driver’s license and proof of insurance if using a personal or funded program-owned vehicle to conduct business; and,	
5	Completed criminal history background check prior to employment start date.	
12.202.2 Crisis Response Services Requirements		
A	Operation of a crisis telephone number accessible to the local community twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven days per week. The crisis line shall be accessible to all callers, including those:	No policy required.
1	Using a “blocked line” where their phone number reads on caller ED as “Unavailable”;	No policy required.
2	With limited spoken English language proficiency through the provision of interpreters or other communication method; and,	Language Access Policy & Protocol

3	Who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind and use a third party telecommunication relay service (such as an IP relay service or a video relay service, teletypewriter (TTY) device) per the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	
B	Availability of employees or volunteers trained in accordance with Section 12.201.2 who are able to respond to emergency crisis situations twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven days per week; or,	Advocate Training Policy
C	Coordination of A or B, above, through a formal memorandum of understanding with a DVP-funded program in good standing serving the same region that operates its own crisis response services as outlined in A and B, above.	The MOU is reviewed during the application/proposal process.
12.202.3	Domestic Violence Advocacy Services Requirements	
A	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP shall provide domestic violence advocacy in the following manner:	
1	By trained employees and volunteers in accordance with Section 13-90-107, C.R.S.;	Domestic Violence Advocacy Services Commitment
2	Free of charge to clients;	
3	Without income qualifications placed on receipt of services;	
4	Without requirements that clients attend a religious activity or instruction as a prerequisite to receive services;	
5	Without requirements for clients to show proof of residency in Colorado or the United States;	
6	Without requirements for clients to submit to criminal background checks, credit checks, drug testing, or a release of information as a condition of services;	
7	On a voluntary basis without any conditions;	
8	Following an intake and assessment of needs and safety; and,	
9	With provisions of referrals when requested services are not available or are denied by the funded program.	
B	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP shall establish a written document outlining the rights afforded to clients who request services. Written rights shall minimally include the following notices:	
1	Identification of criteria for eligibility of domestic violence advocacy services;	Client Rights Form
2	Service accommodations for the following clients: a) Those who are deaf or hard of hearing or have limited English proficiency; and, b) Disabilities including behavioral health conditions.	Client Rights Form Language Access Policy & Protocol Working with Clients w Behavioral Health Concerns
3	Availability of free, voluntary services to be provided without condition or prerequisites including non-proselytization;	Client Rights Form
4	Program adherence to confidential communications including legal exception to confidentiality of mandatory reporting of known or suspected child maltreatment;	
5	Opportunity to provide feedback regarding experience with provision of or denial of services at the funded program;	

6	Procedure to file a grievance or complaint to minimally include the funded program's internal grievance or complaint policy and procedure, and the right to complain to DVP and other applicable regulating agencies regarding services provided or denied; and,	
7	Ability to request access to own client file or record including electronic documentation services provided.	
C	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP shall establish written policies or procedures regarding:	
1	Identification of criteria for eligibility of domestic violence advocacy services;	Eligibility & Non-Discrimination Policy
2	Language accessibility plan to minimally include the use of interpreters, translators, bilingual employees, and/or written materials to provide services to clients who are deaf or hard of hearing and those with limited English proficiency;	Language Access Policy & Protocol
3	Service accommodation plans to minimally include nondiscrimination on the basis of clients' age, disability, behavioral health conditions, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, ethnicity, or gender identity or expression as well as accompanying protocols to ensure an environment that is accessible, culturally relevant, and trauma informed for all clients;	Eligibility & Non-Discrimination Policy Working with Clients with Disabilities Working with Clients with Behavioral Health Concerns
4	Transportation of clients by employees or volunteers of the funded program, if an available service; and,	Transportation Policy
5	Child care by employees or volunteers of the funded program, if an available service, while parent is on-site for a maximum of three hours.	Working with Children & Youth
D	Programs funded wholly or in part by DVP shall ensure full compliance with the requirements of the federal department of health and human services administration for children and families, 45 CFR Part 1370. If a funded program wishes to provide sex segregated or sex-specific programming, they shall submit a written plan to be approved by DVP, which outlines the following:	Working with Clients of All Genders and Orientations
1	Why the sex segregated or sex-specific programming is necessary for the essential safe operations of the program or service;	No template provided - this documentation must be created by the funded program requesting sex-segregated or sex-specific programming.
2	How they will provide comparable services to individuals who cannot participate in the sex segregated or sex-specific programming or service; and,	
3	An analysis of research-supported best practices that justify the need for the sex segregated or sex-specific programming or service.	
12.202.4	Residential Domestic Violence Advocacy Services Requirements	
A	In addition to the requirements in sections 12.202.1 and 12.202.2, funded all programs funded wholly or in part by DVP that offering residential domestic violence advocacy programs services shall:	
1	Notify DVP of intent to open a new residential facility to include documentation of compliance with this section;	No policy required.
2	Notify DVP of the permanent or temporary closure of a residential facility;	No policy required.
3	Screen for appropriate access to a residential facility based on the victim's need for safe, temporary accommodations and fit for communal living;	Eligibility & Non-Discrimination Policy
4	Offer to develop a safety plan to minimally include the client's safe contact with formal and informal support systems while in shelter receiving residential services;	Residential Advocacy Operations Overview

5	Encourage but not mandate participation in supportive services, advocacy, or counseling as a condition of residency receiving residential services;	
6	Maintain quality living conditions to address normal wear and tear to the facility, equipment, and furnishings; and,	Safety Policies
7	Maintain safe living conditions to minimally include:	
	a. Locking doors and windows;	
	b. Appropriate lighting;	
	c. Mechanisms or devices for contacting emergency assistance; and,	
	d. Compliance with applicable fire and safety codes.	
B	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP shall have minimal residential services staffing by employees or volunteers trained in accordance with Section 13-90-107, C.R.S., to include:	Advocate Training Policy
1	An adequate number of employees or volunteers to ensure the health and safety of residential services clients including those at a residential facility or staying in other accommodations such as a motel;	Residential Advocacy Operations Overview
2	Residential services intake availability twenty-four (24) hours per day;	Residential Advocacy Operations Overview
3	Twenty-four (24) hour access for residential services clients to trained employees or volunteers to offer safety planning, advocacy services, support, or assistance, consistent with residents' schedules and needs in-person whenever feasible; and,	
4	If not providing in-person twenty-four (24) hour staffing at a residential facility, a DVP-approved written plan to respond to residential program clients' needs to minimally include employee or volunteer coverage and how clients can access emergency services in the event employees or volunteers are not physically present.	Shelter Services for Facilities not Staffed 24/7
C	All Programs funded wholly or in part by DVP that offer residential services shall have the following:	
1	Separate bedrooms for each family, whenever feasible;	Residential Advocacy Operations Overview
2	Private space for bathing and personal hygiene needs;	
3	Space or rooms designated for quiet time, whenever feasible;	
4	Free food, clothing, toiletries, hygiene products, and other basic needs whenever feasible;	
5	Unrestricted functioning telephone access for the purposes of reaching emergency assistance, securing resources, and maintaining social support;	
6	Laundry facilities;	
7	Access to residential services for victims with service animals;	
8	Assistance with facilitating access to safe housing accommodations for victims with pets or other domesticated animals;	
9	Marked and posted evacuation routes and exits, posting of fire extinguisher locations, and documentation of performance of regular fire drills; and,	Safety Policies
10	Functioning heating, cooling, and ventilation systems.	Residential Advocacy Operations Overview
D	Programs funded wholly or in part by DVP that offer residential services shall have the following written policies and procedures to minimally include:	
1	Admission and eligibility criteria for residential services including provisions for referrals when unable to accommodate an individual or family;	Eligibility & Non-Discrimination Policy

2	Expectations of residential client conduct while receiving services;	Residential Guidelines
3	Residents' voluntary provision of housekeeping, food preparation, or other chores;	
4	Residents' voluntary participation in supportive services such as support groups;	
5	Established involuntary exit criteria for residents;	Involuntary Termination
6	Provision of locked storage of personal valuables and legally prescribed medication to minimally include:	Residential Guidelines Residential Advocacy Operations Overview
	A. Granting residents unrestricted access to personal valuables and prescribed medication; and,	
	B. Employees or volunteers refraining from possessing or dispensing medication to residents unless they are licensed to do so as a health care professional.	
7	Client use of legal substances including tobacco products, alcohol, and marijuana while on the residential facility property;	Safety Policies
8	Safety protocol and procedures to minimally include a response to safety threats, availability of a First Aid kit, and documentation of performance of regular safety drills; and,	
9	Universal precautions for infectious disease.	
12.202.5	Domestic Violence Victim Advocacy Services for Children and Youth Requirements	
A	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP that have residential domestic violence advocacy services shall have written policies and procedures that ensure the following:	
1	Employees and volunteers receive training specific to the dynamics of the impact of domestic violence on children and youth;	Working with Children and Youth
2	Trained advocates offer to conduct a voluntary intake and assessment of children and youth's needs independent from that of the parent's;	
3	Trained advocates inform children and youth of their right to confidential communications and legal exceptions to confidentiality including mandatory reporting of known or suspected child maltreatment;	
4	Accommodate any dependent adult children who have a developmental or physical disability for whom the adult victim is the primary caretaker;	Working with Clients with Disabilities
5	Accommodate teenage children regardless of gender together with their victim parent; and,	Working with Children and Youth
6	Provide access to indoor and outdoor play spaces and recreational opportunities if feasible.	
B	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP that offer non-residential domestic violence advocacy to children and youth shall have written policies and procedures that ensure the following:	
1	Employees and volunteers receive training specific to the dynamics of the impact of domestic violence on children and youth;	Working with Children and Youth
2	Trained advocates offer to conduct a voluntary intake and assessment of children and youth's needs independent from that of the parent's; and,	
3	Trained advocates inform children and youth of their right to confidential communications and legal exceptions to confidentiality including mandatory reporting of known or suspected child maltreatment.	

C	All programs funded wholly or in part by DVP that offer domestic violence advocacy for teens and youth impacted by violence in a dating or intimate relationship shall have written policies and procedures that ensure the following:	
1	Employees and volunteers receive training specific to the dynamics of domestic violence that occurs within a youth or teen's dating or intimate relationship;	Working with Children and Youth
2	Trained advocates conduct a voluntary intake and assessment of teens and youths needs regarding safety and community resources;	
3	Trained advocates inform youth and teens of their right to confidential communications and legal exceptions to confidentiality including mandatory reporting of known or suspected child maltreatment; and,	
4	A written policy that establishes the age of consent for which the funded program may provide domestic violence advocacy services to a minor without parental permission.	