

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND

DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD OUTREACH ASSISTANCE POLICIES

The Outreach Assistance Policies serve to implement the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations* in the daily operation of providing assistance to individuals and families wishing to access services in overcoming trauma associated with the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.

These policies supersede the June 2012 policies. These policies are reviewed and updated as necessary by the Diocesan Review Board.

Questions regarding any of these policies may be directed to the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 804-545-5048; or, the Diocesan Director of Safe Environment at 804-569-5661.

Effective Date: August 17, 2016

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POLICY 01 SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTING

The Diocesan Director of Safe Environment provides oversight of the following functions:

- The Outreach Assistance Program maintains a toll-free line and weblink for reporting sexual abuse and requesting assistance. The program includes training and disseminating information on the Outreach Assistance Program.
- Information about reporting sexual abuse, including the toll-free number, is distributed throughout the Diocese using a variety of materials including but not limited to information in *The Catholic Virginian*, parish bulletins, websites, and print materials.
- Materials regarding such information are examined for sensitivity to the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic needs of those served and the larger community.
- Accommodations relative to these materials are available for persons with visual impairment and those who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- The Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator and other Diocesan employees are mandated reporters of sexual abuse in accordance with federal and state statutes, regulations, and Diocesan policies.

Instructional Note

The following Statute of Limitations applies in matters involving sexual abuse reporting:

- ❖ For criminal proceedings: no statute of limitations on felonies, of which child sexual abuse is one (unless the perpetrator is dead in which case the deceased cannot be prosecuted).
- ❖ For civil proceedings: the current Virginia statute is 20 years after the victim reaches the age of majority; therefore, when 38 years old.
- ❖ For litigation against the Church: 2 years after the victim's age of majority; therefore, when 20 years old.

[Source: William Etherington, legal counsel to the Diocese of Richmond, 2016]

02 VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR: GENERAL ROLE

In its continuing efforts to provide pastoral care to those who claim to have been sexually abused as a minor or vulnerable adult and wishing to access services in overcoming trauma associated with the abuse, the Diocese of Richmond employs the professional position of Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC). While subsequent sections of these policies delineate further the responsibilities of the VAC, the general role of this individual is outlined as follows:

- Manages the Outreach Assistance Program.
- Responds to reports of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults in accordance with the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations* and these policies.
- Provides potential eligible individuals with information regarding: the process in investigating an allegation of sexual abuse; reporting to the Review Board and diocesan officials, and civil officials as needed; website links to the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations*; and the Outreach Assistance Program.
 - Advises the potential eligible individual that the information s/he shares remains confidential within the scope of the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations*; however, such information may be subject to review in civil, criminal, and canonical investigations.
 - Advises the potential eligible individual that information may flow to the Bishop, Vicar General, Review Board, Vicar for Clergy, diocesan legal counsel, charter auditors, insurers, and other Diocesan officials.
- Coordinates the Service Plans for each eligible individual.
- Maintains accurate records according to these policies.
- Issues quarterly and semiannual reports to the Review Board on the status of eligible individuals.
- Coordinates the administrative functions and fee structures for each Service Plan.
- Reviews as needed any aspect of the Outreach Assistance Program with the Diocesan Director of Safe Environment.
- Adheres to these policies regarding confidentiality.
- Provides the Review Board and the Diocesan Director of Safe Environment with information and documentation relative to the Diocese's responsibilities for Quality Assurance as related to the Outreach Assistance Program.

POLICY 03 AVAILABLE OUTREACH ASSISTANCE SERVICES

- Outreach Assistance enables individuals and families to access services that may be helpful in overcoming trauma associated with sexual abuse. Services may include:
 - Medical expenses including eye, ear, and dental care in which the individual’s sexual abuse has caused bodily harm.
 - Mental health expenses associated with matters related to the individual’s sexual abuse.
 - Prescriptions for psychotherapy and psychotropic medications for the eligible individual.
 - Travel to and from approved appointments by the eligible individual.

- Outreach Assistance is available to eligible persons regardless of race, color, age, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, veteran status, or qualified persons with disabilities.

- Eligible individuals receive Outreach Assistance services through a Service Plan that includes treatment goals and service agreement with each provider.
 - The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) coordinates each plan with the eligible individual and their providers.
 - The VAC provides the Review Board with quarterly updates of each eligible individual’s plan.
 - The VAC updates each plan, as needed, and follows the Review Board’s direction regarding any particular service for an eligible individual.

- The service agreement includes:
 - type of services to be provided;
 - length of service;
 - scheduling and fee arrangements;
 - safety plans, as applicable;
 - information regarding interrupted or termination of services; and,
 - requirements for semiannual reports to the Review Board.

- Eligible individuals are responsible for accessing services directly. The VAC and members of the Review Board are not responsible for scheduling such services.
- Eligible individuals receiving Outreach Assistance may continue to receive assistance consistent with treatment goals and service agreements for a period not to exceed ten (10) years from the initial date of the service(s).

Inactive Status

- Outreach Assistance services may be interrupted for an eligible individual in the event that:
 - care/service issues require third-party management;
 - services are temporarily unavailable; or
 - the eligible individual fails to comply with the service agreement.
- Eligible individuals for whom services are interrupted are linked to appropriate resources.
- Information regarding the eligible individual's inactive status, including the reason for this status, are documented in the eligible individual's file.
- Eligible individuals who are on inactive status may return to services within 180 calendar days of the interrupted services if the reason for the interruption has been adequately resolved and the resolution is documented.

Termination of Services

- An eligible individual receiving Outreach Assistance may voluntarily terminate assistance for any reason at any time.
- The Diocese may terminate Outreach Assistance for the following reasons:
 - individual no longer meets eligibility requirements;
 - individual fails to provide needed materials or information;
 - individual has reached the end of the length of the services;
 - individual repeatedly fails to utilize services/attend appointments;
 - services are no longer available;
 - services are no longer required; or,
 - individual has been out of contact with the VAC for 180 calendar days.

- Prior to the termination of services, eligible individuals receiving Outreach Assistance are encouraged to meet with the VAC or other Diocesan representative to explore alternative resources for Outreach Assistance and healing.
- Termination information, including the reason for termination, is documented in the case file.
- Eligible individuals terminated from services may return to services if the reason for the termination has been resolved and the resolution is documented.
- The VAC conducts an updated assessment for any previously eligible individual who has been terminated from services and requests to reactivate services. The VAC reviews the case for approval with the Review Board prior to initiation of any service.

Reactivation of Services

Reactivating services does not alter the initial start date of the services for an eligible individual whose status has been inactive or for whom services had been terminated.

04 ASSESSMENT FOR OUTREACH ASSISTANCE SERVICES

- In accordance with the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations (Regulations)*, the Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) conducts an interview and/or assessment within 72 hours of receiving the initial intake information, documenting any exceptions to the timeline.
 - The VAC informs the potential eligible individual of the reporting steps and procedures for investigating the sexual abuse claim according to the *Regulations*, as well as confidentiality requirements.
 - The VAC provides the Review Board with a report of the interview and/or assessment in accordance with the *Regulations*.
 - The VAC updates this information for further assessment following the Bishop’s determination of the individual’s eligibility for services.
- Eligibility for services follows the Bishop’s determination, with the assistance of the Review Board, of the credibility, substance, and gravity of the allegation of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult.
- The VAC determines the need for an in-person interview and/or assessment with the potential eligible individual.
- The interview and/or assessment:
 - determines appropriateness for services;
 - screens for risks of harm;
 - ensures equitable treatment of eligible individuals; and,
 - links the potential eligible individual to services that meet treatment needs.
- The assessment includes:
 - eligible individual’s history;
 - presenting problems;
 - review of resources; and,
 - risk assessment.

05 ADMINISTRATIVE AND FEE STRUCTURES FOR SERVICES

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) coordinates the following functions:

- Prior to the onset of medical and/or mental health services, the VAC asks the treatment provider to submit a curriculum vitae, evidence of licensure, evidence of liability or malpractice insurance, and a W-9. The VAC reviews this information as needed with the Diocesan Director of Safe Environment. The VAC advises the treatment provider and eligible individual of the Diocese's acceptance or non-acceptance of the provider.
- Treatment providers are required to submit to the VAC quarterly progress reports and an updated annual treatment plan in order to determine the continuation or revision of assistance.
- The VAC advises the provider and eligible individual if services will be suspended pending clinical review of treatment plans and treatment documentation. The VAC advises the eligible individual if an assessment by an independent treatment provider may be required for the eligible individual for just cause.

FEE STRUCTURES

[Exceptions to any of the following provisions require the VAC's review with the Office of the Bishop.]

The VAC coordinates the following functions:

- Eligible individuals are charged no fees for Outreach Assistance and are expected to utilize the most cost effective manner possible.
- The Diocese of Richmond (Diocese) pays reasonable fees for services and prescriptions. Reasonable fees are calculated according to comparable service fees and the current industry standard in the eligible individual's geographic region of Virginia.
- The Diocese pays for one hour of therapy once a week with a mental health professional, such as, a licensed psychologist, licensed clinical counselor, or licensed clinical social worker.
- The Diocese does not pay for missed or cancelled appointments, telephonic or electronic exchanges, or treatment reports.
- Requests for reimbursement must be in the form of an Invoice.
- Upon request of the eligible individual, the VAC provides the eligible individuals with copies of all checks sent to treatment providers.

Insurance Coverage

- If the eligible individual has insurance coverage, providers must bill insurance for services.
- The Diocese reimburses co-pays and deductibles through monthly billing of the provider or directly to the eligible individual, as applicable.

Prescriptions

- Eligible individuals must submit receipts for prescriptions in order to receive reimbursement.
- Receipts must be accompanied by a pharmacy ticket that details the name of the medication, dosage, prescribing physician, and cost.
- Photo receipts are permissible.
- The Diocese does not pay for lost medications, pre-ordered refills, over-the-counter medications, or prescriptions or refill orders from a non-approved provider.

Travel

- Eligible individuals must submit receipts for actual travel expenses to and from home and the provider, including toll roads.
- Only documented travel expenses are reimbursed. A web-based map must accompany mileage requests to substantiate mileage.
- Mileage is reimbursed at the Federal rate.
- Travel may include pre-authorized overnight accommodations.

06 RECORD MAINTENANCE

- Each eligible individual is required to provide the Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) with information necessary for the maintenance of a complete file for the individual, including but not limited to:
 - demographic information;
 - insurance information;
 - specific details as to the nature of the sexual abuse leading to the application; and,
 - goals related to the use of Outreach Assistance.
- The VAC maintains a factual record of each contact involving the eligible individual, initiated by the VAC or the eligible individual. The record must contain:
 - eligible individual identifier;
 - date, time, and duration of contact; and
 - documentation notes.
- Each eligible individual must communicate with the VAC semiannually to report progress towards goals and update file information. The semiannual report documents:
 - status of the eligible individual;
 - eligible individual's progress with goals;
 - necessary follow-up for any outstanding issues; and
 - determination of continuation, completion, or termination of services.
- Confidentiality:
 - Confidentiality relative to allegations of sexual abuse, potential and eligible individuals, and all aspects of the Outreach Assistance Program, as well as matters regulated by the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations*, extends to the VAC, members of the Review Board, and Diocesan officials.
 - In order to maintain confidentiality of all parties involved in allegations of sexual abuse and subsequent information and/or documentation relative to an eligible individual's Service Plan, meetings of the Review Board are closed to the public.

- The VAC maintains files for each eligible individual in a confidential manner in accordance with the records management policy of the Diocese.
- Eligible individuals may have access to the information contained in their files upon written request, unless the release of information is determined by the Review Board to pose significant risk to the eligible individual, or the information is excluded from review by law or the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations*.
- Eligible individuals may submit written/electronic statements for inclusion in their files.
- Exceptions to confidentiality include:
 - responses to subpoenas;
 - reports of suspected abuse and neglect to appropriate authorities; or,
 - reports of danger or threats of harm to self or others.

07 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- The Review Board provides oversight of the Outreach Assistance Program.
 - The Review Board provides quality assurance through on-going review and assessment of cases.
 - In reviewing each eligible individual’s case, the Review Board examines diagnosis, semiannual reports and other support materials to ensure effective treatment and solutions for identified problems.
 - The Review Board reviews all grievances and critical incident reports and initiates immediate corrective action as necessary.
- The Diocesan Director of Safe Environment provides oversight of the operational functions of the Outreach Assistance Program.
 - The Diocese participates in an annual, independent audit to ensure compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The Diocese initiates corrective actions, as necessary, to ensure compliance with the *Charter*.
- The Diocese of Richmond is the final arbiter of any and all disputes related to the Outreach Assistance Program.