

# Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee Meeting Agenda

Tuckahoe Branch – Henrico Public Library  
Wednesday, March 29, 2023  
10:30a.m-4:00p.m.

- **Welcome & Remarks (5 minutes)**
  - *Kristina Vadas, Manager, Victims Services*
  - *Amber Stanwix, Professional Standards Coordinator*
  - *Andrea Sutton, Professional Standards Consultant*
- **Introductions of Committee Members (10 minutes)**
- **Review of Current By-Laws (10 minutes)**
  - *Amber Stanwix*
- **Election of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair (5 minutes)**
- **Legislative Changes Impacting Committee (15 minutes)**
  - *2021 changes - House Bill 2317*
  - *2022 changes - House Bill 444*
    - *Amber Stanwix*
- **Review and Approval of Updated By-Laws and Electronic Meetings Policy (15 minutes)**
  - *Amber Stanwix*
- **Break (10 minutes)**
- **Review of Professional Standards Manual (45 minutes)**
  - *Amber Stanwix and Andrea Sutton*
- **Review of Professional Standards Procedure Documents (30 minutes)**
  - *Amber Stanwix and Andrea Sutton*
- **Break for Lunch (1 hour)**

- **Review of Professional Standards Application and Site Visit Checklist** (30 minutes)
  - *Amber Stanwix and Andrea Sutton*
- **Discussion Regarding Post-Accreditation Actions** (15 minutes)
  - *The accreditation decision letter sent to agencies - Who signs?*
- **Break** (10 minutes)
- **Description of the Accreditation Process to Date** (1 hour)
  - *Amber Stanwix and Andrea Sutton*
- **Public Comment** (5 minutes)
- **Closing Remarks** (5 minutes)
  - *Committee Chair*
  - *Amber Stanwix and Andrea Sutton*
- **Next Meeting: TBD**

# Professional Standards Application Process

## I. Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee

In 2015, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation creating the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee (the “PSC”). The purpose of the PSC is to establish voluntary accreditation standards and measures by which local sexual and domestic violence programs can be systematically evaluated with a peer-reviewed process. Prior to 2015, the accreditation process had been developed and coordinated by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (the “Action Alliance”).

The PSC is responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to it under Chapter 1 of Title 9.1 of the *Code of Virginia* ([§ 9.1-116.3](#)). The PCS consists of the following: one nonvoting member representing the Department of Criminal Justice Services (“DCJS”); one nonvoting member appointed by and representative of the Department of Social Services; one nonvoting member appointed by and representative of the Action Alliance; and 12 non-legislative citizen members appointed by the Governor, who must be leadership staff of local sexual and domestic violence programs. The appointment of members must take into consideration racial and ethnic diversity and must be representative of regional and geographic locations of the Commonwealth.

In addition, the PSC receives assistance from the DCJS Professional Standards Team (the “Team”), which is made up of the Professional Standards Coordinator (the “Coordinator”) and the Professional Standards Consultant (the “Consultant”). The Team acts as staff support (e.g., meeting logistics, research, best practices), facilitates and implements the accreditation process (e.g., provides technical assistance), conducts site visits, and serves as a liaison for the PSC.

## II. Professional Standards Application Fee

The fee for an agency to apply for accreditation is \$150.00, to be paid at the time of application to DCJS. Fees will be used to support administrative costs of DCJS to manage the application process, as outlined in *Code of Virginia* § 9.1-116.3: “Fees for accreditation shall be used to support any administrative costs of the Department.”

The fee will be paid one time for every three-year accreditation period. The fee is non-refundable. There is no annual fee to be an accredited agency.

## III. Timeline

### A. Due Dates

Sexual and Domestic Violence Agencies (“SDVAs”) that are not currently accredited may submit an Organizational Self-Assessment Summary during the period announced annually by the PSC and/or DCJS. Of the summaries submitted, up to 20 agencies will be randomly selected to apply for accreditation that year. Application information, instructions, and due dates will be sent to those agencies. Agencies that are not selected to apply will be notified.

If a large number of agencies are renewing accreditation during a specific application cycle, the Professional Standards Team can select more agencies at its discretion in order to avoid a lapse in accreditation. Accredited SDVAs wishing to retain their accreditation must apply for renewal in their third full year to avoid a gap or lapse in their status.

## B. Status Validity

Full accreditation status will be valid for three years after the initial determination. The dates of status validity will be clearly listed in accreditation materials provided to the agency and documented for the PSC by the Team.

## C. Process Timeline

The accreditation process will take approximately six months to one year from the time an application is submitted until a final decision is made by the PSC. In the event of unexpected or extraordinary circumstances, this process may be delayed; but every effort will be made to complete this in a timely manner.

Once a complete application for accreditation is submitted to DCJS, the Team will confirm receipt of application. The Team will then create a schedule for reviewing applications and begin the evaluation process. As applications are reviewed, the Coordinator may send out requests for additional information. Once the initial review is complete, the site visit will be scheduled. Site visits will be conducted by the Consultant.

After the site visit has been completed, the Coordinator and Consultant will meet to discuss their findings. If additional information is needed from the applicant agency, it will be requested at this time. Once all information has been received, the Team will then draft a summary to be presented to the PSC at the quarterly meeting following the site visit and application review. The approval process will operate in accordance with the procedures specified in the **Professional Standards Accreditation Status Procedures**.

## IV. Application Process

### A. Organizational Self-Assessment Summary

Organizational Self-Assessment Summaries are accepted by DCJS during the period announced annually by the PSC and/or DCJS. The Organizational Self-Assessment is available on the DCJS website [here](#).

The Organizational Self-Assessment should be completed internally by agencies interested in seeking accreditation. Upon completion, if an agency believes they meet the requirements of the Professional Standards, they should complete an Organizational Self-Assessment Summary, located [here](#), and submit it to the Team at [sdvstandards@dcjs.virginia.gov](mailto:sdvstandards@dcjs.virginia.gov). Once received, further instructions will be sent to agencies by the Team.

### B. Professional Standards Application

The Professional Standards application is completed online and is password-protected. Eligible applicants will be provided with a link to the application and the password once selected to apply. An example of the current Professional Standards application may be found on the DCJS website [here](#).

### C. Site Visit

After the Team receives an application, the applicant will be contacted by the Consultant to schedule a site visit. During the site visit, the Consultant will ask questions and complete the Site Visit Checklist to assess compliance with the Professional Standards. A sample of the current Site Visit Checklist is available [here](#).

### D. Application Review

Review of each application will be completed by the Team. Based upon their findings, a recommendation will be presented to the full PSC for consideration and status determination. The PSC will reach consensus on one of the status determinations, as outlined in the next section. Decisions shall be made by the majority of those present and voting.

Recommendations to the PSC will be based on responses to the application questions, documentation submitted with the application, site visit questions, and Site Visit Checklist criteria.

Members of the PSC affiliated with an applicant agency will withdraw their participation and presence during meetings and decision-making regarding that agency's application.

### E. Status Determination

There are three possible status determinations for Professional Standards applicants:

#### **Fully Accredited:**

The PSC will determine a status of *Fully Accredited* for an agency having demonstrated through the review process that the agency meets 100% of the Professional Standards.

#### **Provisionally Accredited:**

Agencies that do not meet 100% of the Professional Standards may be *Provisionally Accredited*.

To be considered provisionally accredited, applicant agencies must, at a minimum, demonstrate that they provide 24-hour crisis intervention services to all victims of sexual and/or domestic violence in their communities, and that these services are confidential and free of charge. These services must include a hotline, provisions for emergency housing, and emergency accompaniment for victims of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Provisionally accredited agencies have up to six months from the time of receiving provisional accreditation status to submit a Plan of Action that will be used to comply with all unmet criteria. Agencies will then have up to 12 months from the time of receiving provisional accreditation status to document that the Plan of Action has been followed and that the Professional Standards are being met. Plans of Action and associated timelines are the responsibility of the applicant agencies. The Coordinator will also provide periodic updates to the PSC.

At any time during the 12-month period, documentation in response to Plans of Action may be submitted to the Coordinator, who will provide it to the PSC. The PSC will review the information and may vote to change the applicant's status from provisionally accredited to

fully accredited. In addition, as available, the PSC and the Team will provide support, assistance, and resources to provisionally accredited agencies as they endeavor to become fully accredited.

**Denied:**

The PSC will deny accreditation status to any agency that does not, at a minimum, demonstrate that they provide 24-hour crisis intervention services to all victims of sexual and/or domestic violence in their communities, and that these services are confidential and free of charge. Crisis intervention services must include a hotline, provisions for emergency housing, and emergency accompaniment for victims of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Additionally, the PSC will deny accreditation to any provisionally accredited agencies that do not submit Plans of Action within six months of receiving the provisional accreditation status or do not meet the requirements of the Professional Standards within 12 months from the time of receiving provisional accreditation status.

Denied applicants may be given preference to apply during the next application cycle. As available, support, assistance, and resources will be provided to agencies in preparing for future applications.

**F. Plans of Action**

Applicants are encouraged to submit Plans of Action and timelines for any unmet standards at the time of application. In addition, Plans of Action may be requested at any time by the PSC or the Team.

As previously noted, provisionally accredited agencies have up to six months from the time of receiving provisional accreditation status to submit a Plan of Action that will be used to comply with all unmet criteria. Agencies will then have up to 12 months from the time of receiving provisional accreditation status to document that the Plan of Action has been followed and that the Professional Standards are being met.

**G. Change in Status**

The PSC may change a status from provisionally accredited to fully accredited once the agency meets 100% of the Professional Standards. The PSC may request a site visit prior to granting a change in status, which will be completed by the Consultant.

**V. Status Determination Appeals**

Agencies may initiate an appeal of any PSC status determination by submitting a letter of appeal via email to the Coordinator at [sdvstandards@dcjs.virginia.gov](mailto:sdvstandards@dcjs.virginia.gov).

The appeal process will operate in accordance with the procedures specified in the **Professional Standards Appeals Procedures**.

# Professional Standards Accreditation Status Procedures

## Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for members of the Professional Standards Committee (the "PSC") to vote on application recommendations.

## Procedure:

1. The Professional Standards Coordinator (the "Coordinator"), staff member of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services ("DCJS"), will lead the review of applications for accreditation submitted during the annual period of acceptance. The Coordinator will evaluate all applications and materials submitted for consideration for accreditation.
2. The Professional Standards Site Visit Consultant (the "Consultant"), staff member of DCJS, will assist with the evaluation of applications in collaboration with the Coordinator. The Consultant will conduct all site visits with applicant programs.
3. The Coordinator and Consultant will meet to review their evaluation findings. For each applicant, they will prepare a summary report of their findings, the status recommendation, and an explanation of why that status is recommended to be presented at the next meeting of the PSC.
4. At the next regularly scheduled meeting, the PSC will discuss the recommendations and vote on applicants' status determinations. Members of the PSC affiliated with an applicant agency will withdraw their participation and presence during meetings and decision-making on that agency's application.
5. Decisions regarding status determinations shall be made by the majority of those present and voting.
6. The Coordinator will notify applicants of their status within ten business days following the meeting.
7. The process for helping agencies move from provisionally accredited to fully accredited shall operate in accordance with the procedures specified in the **Professional Standards Application Process**.

# Professional Standards Appeals Procedures

## Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to detail the status determination appeals process.

## Procedure:

1. The Professional Standards Committee (the "PSC") will accept requests for appeal from Professional Standards accreditation applicants that dispute a **denied accreditation status**.
2. Letters of appeal will be directed to the Department of Criminal Justice Services ("DCJS") Professional Standards Coordinator (the "Coordinator"). The letters must include the reasons why the denied status is disputed and provide specific supporting documentation. The Coordinator will seek additional information to support the appeal, if necessary.
3. Once a letter of appeal has been received, the Coordinator will notify members of the PSC.
4. The PSC will appoint an Appeals Subcommittee of three current and/or former PSC members. The Appeals Subcommittee will also include the Coordinator and the DCJS Professional Standards Consultant as nonvoting members.
5. The Appeals Subcommittee will review all appeals and make determinations within 90 days after receipt.
6. The decision of the Appeals Subcommittee is final and will be provided to the PSC and to the appealing agency within ten (10) business days of the meeting to review the appeal.
7. Members of the PSC affiliated with an appealing agency will withdraw their participation and presence during meetings and decision-making on that agency's appeal.