

Section 5.10. Nondisclosure of Confidential or Private Information. In order to ensure the safety of adult, youth, and child victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and their families, or stalking, Grantee shall protect the confidentiality and privacy of persons receiving services.

- (a) The term “personally identifying information”, “individual information”, or “personal information” means individually identifying information for or about an individual victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including (1) a first and last name; (2) a home or other physical address; (3) contact information (including a postal, e-mail or Internet protocol address, or telephone or facsimile number); (4) a social security number; and (5) any other information, including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation, that, in combination with any other non-personally identifying information would serve to identify any individual.
- (b) Grantee may share (1) non-personally identifying data in the aggregate regarding services to their clients and non-personally identifying information in order to comply with Federal, State, tribal, or territorial reporting, evaluation, or data collection requirements; (2) court-generated information and law-enforcement generated information contained in secure, governmental registries for protection order enforcement purposes; and (3) law-enforcement and prosecution-generated information necessary for law enforcement and prosecution purposes.
- (c) Grantee shall not disclose any personally identifying information or individual information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through Grantee’s programs, regardless of whether the information has been encoded, encrypted, hashed or otherwise protected. This applies to:
 - (i) Information being requested for a Federal, State, tribal, or territorial grant program; and
 - (ii) Disclosure from the Grantee’s organization, agency, or government, including victim and non-victim services divisions or components and leadership of the organization, agency or government; and
 - (iii) Disclosure from victim services divisions or components of an organization, agency, or government to the leadership of the organization, agency, or government (e.g., executive director or chief executive). Such executive shall have access without releases only in extraordinary and rare circumstances. Such circumstances do not include routine monitoring and supervision.
- (d) Personally identifying information or individual information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through Grantee’s programs may not be released except under the following circumstances:
 - (i) The victim signs a release as provided below;
 - (ii) Release is compelled by statutory mandate, which includes mandatory child abuse reporting laws;
 - (iii) Release is compelled by court mandate, which includes a legal mandate created by case law, such as a common-law duty to warn; and

(e) Victim releases must meet the following criteria:

(i) Releases must be informed, written, reasonably time-limited. Grantee may not use a blanket release and must specify the scope and limited circumstances of any disclosure. At a minimum, Grantee must: discuss with the victim why the information might be shared, who would have access to the information, and what information could be shared under the release; reach agreement with the victim about what information would be shared and with whom; and record the agreement about the scope of the release. A release must specify the duration for which information may be shared. The reasonableness of this time period will depend on the specific situation.

(ii) Grantee may not require consent to release of information as a condition of service.

(iii) Releases must be signed by the victim unless the victim is a minor who lacks the capacity to consent to release or is a legally incapacitated person and has a court-appointed guardian. Except as provided in paragraph (c)(iv) of this section, in the case of an unemancipated minor, the release must be signed by the minor and a parent or guardian; in the case of a legally incapacitated person, it must be signed by a legally-appointed guardian. Consent may not be given by the abuser of the minor or incapacitated person or the abuser of the other parent of the minor. If a minor is incapable of knowingly consenting, the parent or guardian may provide consent. If a parent or guardian consents for a minor, the grantee or subgrantee should attempt to notify the minor as appropriate.

(iv) If the minor or person with a legally appointed guardian is permitted by law to receive services without the parent's or guardian's consent, the minor or person with a guardian may consent to release information without additional consent.

(f) If release of information described in the previous paragraph is compelled by statutory or court mandate, Grantee shall make reasonable attempts to provide notice to victims affected by the disclosure of information; and Grantee shall take steps necessary to protect the privacy and safety of the persons affected by the release of the information.

(g) Fatality reviews. Grantee may share personally identifying information or individual information that is collected as described in paragraph (a) of this section about deceased victims being sought for a fatality review to the extent permitted by their jurisdiction's law and only if the following conditions are met:

(i) The underlying objectives of the fatality review are to prevent future deaths, enhance victim safety, and increase offender accountability;

(ii) The fatality review includes policies and protocols to protect identifying information, including identifying information about the victim's children, from further release outside the fatality review team;

(iii) The Grantee makes a reasonable effort to get a release from the victim's personal representative (if one has been appointed) and from any surviving minor children or the guardian of such children (but not if the guardian is the abuser of the deceased parent), if the children are not capable of knowingly consenting; and

(iv) The information released is limited to that which is necessary for the purposes of the fatality review.

- (h) Inadvertent release. Grantee is responsible for taking reasonable efforts to prevent inadvertent releases of personally identifying information or individual information that is collected as described in paragraph (a) of this section.
- (i) Grantee shall notify the Department promptly after receiving a request from the media for information regarding a recipient of services funded with Grant money.