Maternal and Child Health
Battered Women Shelter Program
CORE SERVICE STANDARDS
2005-2010

These Service Standards are defined as the minimum core services that delineate a comprehensive shelter-based domestic violence service provider. MCH requires these Core Service Standards for initial and ongoing funding for the Battered Women Shelter Program.

The Core Services Standards are deemed necessary for a comprehensive program that responds specifically to the needs of battered women and their children. Although these services are presented as individual sets of activities, they may have considerable overlap and inter-dependency.

Required Core Services:

1. Twenty-Four Hour Crisis Hotline

   The agency must, either independently of in conjunction with other local agencies, maintain a 24-hour, daily crisis hotline. Crisis intervention and assistance to battered women and their children must be provided through this telephone response.

2. Counseling (Individual and Peer Group)

   Individual - The grantee must provide a means for battered women and their children to obtain individual counseling, when it is requested or deemed advisable by project staff. Paid or volunteer staff may provide this service. The counseling requirement may also be met by the development and implementation of written procedures for referrals to qualified professional counselors and/or counseling agencies. The grantee is not obligated by MCH to be financially responsible for any referrals made for counseling service.

   Peer Group - The grantee must provide peer group support counseling for battered women. These structured and facilitated services must be provided at either the shelter and/or business center.

3. Business Centers

The grantee must have an established office location where assistance will be provided to battered women and their children. At a minimum, business offices must be open during routine business hours, i.e., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office must have a walk-in location during business hours. If there is no office, there must be a community place for brief use until the client can get to the office or shelter location. Staff/volunteer coverage must be provided during lunch hours and staff meetings to accommodate battered women's/children's service needs.

4. Emergency Safe Homes or Shelters for Battered Women and Their Children

The grantee must provide emergency shelter services for battered women and their children. These shelter services must be provided daily and on a 24-hour basis.

5. Emergency Food and Clothing

The grantee must provide a means for responding to the immediate food and clothing needs of battered women and their children. This requirement may be met by the development and implementation of written referral procedures.

6. Emergency Response to Calls from Law Enforcement

The grantee must provide 24-hour telephone response to law enforcement agencies (in the service area) in the provision of emergency services to battered women. Written procedures on how services will be coordinated with local law enforcement agencies must be available to MCH.

7. Hospital Emergency Room Protocol and Assistance

The grantee must consult with local emergency medical treatment facilities within the service area, to establish and/or maintain a plan with cooperating medical facilities, for the treatment and assistance of battered women. The grantee must provide staff who, will respond to referrals and requests for assistance from emergency medical treatment facilities on a 24-hour basis.

8. Emergency Transportation

The grantee must provide a means for emergency transportation to shelters or other places of safety as appropriate for battered women and their children. This requirement may be met by the development and implementation of written referral policies. The grantee must ensure 24-hour availability of emergency transportation.

9. Counseling for Children

The grantee must provide a means for children of battered women to obtain counseling. Paid or volunteer staff may provide this service. Developing and implementing written procedures for referring children to counseling may meet this requirement. The grantee is not obligated by MCH to be financially responsible for any referrals that are made.

10. Court and Social Advocacy

The grantee must provide assistance to battered women and their children in understanding and using judicial and social services established in the community. Advocacy and/or accompaniment must be provided.

11. Legal Assistance with Temporary Restraining Orders and Custody Disputes

The grantee must provide information and assistance to battered women in understanding, preparing and processing the legal documents necessary to obtain temporary restraining orders and other protective or custody orders. Developing and implementing a written agreement with a referral agency may meet this requirement. The grantee is not obligated by MCH to be financially responsible for any referrals made.

12. Community Resource and Referral

The grantee must establish itself as an active participant in the local public and private health and social services network and advocate for the timely and comprehensive response to the needs of battered women and their children. Grantees must collaborate with all local health, public health, and social services agencies that are available to assist battered women and their children, and when appropriate, must refer clients to those agencies.

13. Household Establishment Assistance

Grantees must, when requested, provide assistance to battered women and their children in establishing new permanent residences. The extent of the assistance provided may depend on the resources available in the community.

14. Cultural/Linguistic Competency

Cultural/linguistic competency is seen as a method to increase access to quality services for all battered women and their children and as a business imperative to respond to diverse populations and to attract new clients to shelter-based domestic violence services. The primary objective is to ensure the safety of all battered women and their children. Each grantee must develop a policy statement and implementation plan to provide culturally/linguistically competent shelter-based domestic violence services to women from varying backgrounds, including, but not limited to, race/ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, literacy level, and/or mental health status.