MEMBERSHIP AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS

FOR DOMESTIC

VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

# MISSISSIPPI COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# Revised June 2011

###### Membership and Certification Process for Domestic Violence Programs

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1. **OVERVIEW**

##### The Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence is comprised of people with concerns of victims of family violence. We represent both rural and urban areas. Our programs support and serve victims of all racial, social, ethnic, religious, and economic groups, regardless of age, sex, or lifestyle. We oppose the use of violence as a means of control over others and support respect and equality in relationships. We encourage and support victims of domestic violence assuring responsibility over their lives in the community.

The membership and certification process described in the following pages has developed to assure that member shelter programs within Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence (MCADV) and shelter programs applying for membership, provide a consistent standard of service. The Coalition is responsible to the victims of domestic violence that are served by member programs to provide for minimum standards of program content, physical safety, and fiscal management. This process will also serve to assure that victims receiving services in member programs are afforded basic rights and that these programs provide services in an ethically responsible manner. The minimum standards were implemented January 1, 2005. Certification status is valid for two years from the date of the completed certification process.

The Coalition serves as a resource for member shelters, as a referral source for victims of domestic violence, and a funding source. The member shelters in the Coalition recognize the importance of maintaining collaborative relationships with each other and other relevant state and local agencies. The member shelters also recognize how a consistent standard of operation will increase the effectiveness of all domestic violence shelter services. Each shelter is a critical component for providing to victims safety, advocacy, education, and awareness of domestic violence.

1. **MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

An applicant must be a community-based, private, non-profit organization that tailors its services to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence and publicly identifies itself as a domestic violence program. These services include, but are not limited to:

1. Shelter and food on a twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) day-a-week basis.
2. Twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) day-a-week switchboard for crisis calls.
3. Group support and peer counseling.
4. Referrals to existing services in the community and follow-up on the outcome of the referrals.
5. A method of referral for medical care, legal assistance, group support, and counseling of victims of domestic violence.
6. Information regarding re-education, marriage and family counseling, job counseling, training programs, housing referrals, and other available social services.
7. A referral program of counseling for the victim and the offender.
8. Procedures for admission of victims of domestic violence who may seek admission to these shelters on a voluntary basis.
9. Employees or volunteers of the applicant organization shall be required to maintain the confidentiality of any information that would identify individuals served by the applicant organization.
10. Provision of educational programs relating to battered spouses and domestic violence victims designed for both the community-at-large and/or specialized groups such as hospital personnel and law enforcement officials.
11. Possession of IRS 501(c)(3) status.
12. Serve the designated Highway Patrol District area.
13. Adhere to the philosophy and purposes of the Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
14. Be a registered charity with the Mississippi Secretary of State.
15. Be a fully operational domestic violence shelter program in the State of Mississippi for a minimum of two years prior to application.
16. **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS**
17. A non-refundable application fee of $125.00 will be charged to the applicant organization, and should be included with the written application.
18. The Executive Committee, or a membership committee appointed by the Executive Committee, will be responsible for initially reviewing the application. The committee will conduct an on-site inspection of the physical facility. All written records of the applicant organization shall be made available to the review committee. Once the committee has completed their review and inspection, they will make recommendations regarding membership to the full Board of Directors. The Board will then have thirty (3) days to consider the application and upon a two-thirds majority vote to the Board of Directors, the application will be approved.
19. If accepted as a voting member by the MCADV Board of Directors, the applicant organization must pay current membership dues within thirty (30) days after receipt of notification of acceptance into MCADV.

(SEE ATTACHMENT A – APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP)

(SEE ATTACHMENT B – CHECKLIST OF ATTACHMENTS)

1. **MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**
2. Technical Assistance regarding upcoming trainings, conferences and current information on local, state, and national issues pertinent to the domestic violence movement.
3. Access to the Resource Library with up-to-date books, manuals, periodicals, tapes and articles pertaining to domestic violence.
4. Training on pertinent issues for domestic violence shelter staff and statewide training efforts for targeted populations (e.g. law enforcement, judges, clergy, health professionals, mental health professionals, substance abuse professionals, social workers, etc.)
5. Statewide monthly meetings that offer an opportunity to learn, network, and share information with other Coalition members.

Once an applicant organization has been accepted for membership into MCADV, they must meet the requirements for certification within one (1) year of acceptance.

1. **CERTIFICATION PROCESS STRUCTURE**

The certification process will be accomplished by a series of site visits to the member shelter programs by an independent consultant(s). The Coalition will contract with the consultant(s) to conduct site visits to each member shelter program and to programs applying for full membership, to determine the program’s compliance with MCADV Standards. Technical assistance to shelter programs prior to the certification site review will be provided by MCADV and/or a member shelter program.

1. **SCHEDULING OF CERTIFICATION SITE VISITS**

The consultant(s) will schedule the site visit with the member shelter program at least 20 working days prior to the visit. Notification will be in the form of a letter faxed and mailed to the Executive Director of the shelter program, with a copy sent to the MCADV office. The site visit may be re-scheduled one time.

Each member shelter program will be reviewed on a biannual basis.

1. **SITE VISITS**

Site visits include a comprehensive review of the policy and procedure manual, a facility walk-through, inspection of all administrative, shelter and common areas. Site visits also include a review of all shelter operational records, a review of fiscal procedures, insurance information, fire inspection information, minutes of board meetings, personnel files, volunteer files, current and former client files, admission and discharge process, orientation of employees, volunteers and clients.

In order for these site visits to be as productive as possible, some steps should be completed prior to the date of the scheduled visit as follows:

1. The member shelter program shall review the attached evaluation checklist for the standards.
2. The member shelter program shall provide all contact information for the member shelter executive director, and the member shelter board president.
3. The member shelter program shall provide the shelter policy and procedure manual to the consultant(s) at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled visit.
4. The member shelter program shall gather all required records for review.

On the day of the scheduled visit the executive director of the member shelter program should be available to answer any questions the consultant(s) may have. There should be a private area set aside with adequate space for the consultant(s). Additional information and paperwork may be needed.

1. **NOTICE OF COMPLIANCE**

Member shelter programs must be in compliance with MCADV Standards to be eligible for certification. The consultant(s) will issue a site visit report with MCADV Standards within seven (7) working days after the site visit to the chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee and the Executive Director of MCADV. A certificate verifying compliance with the certification process will be issued by the MCADV office to the shelter program.

**IX. NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANCE (NON-EMERGENCY)**

The consultant(s) will issue documentation of non-compliance with MCADV Standards within seven (7) working days after the site visit to the Executive Director and Board President of the member shelter program and the Executive Director of MCADV and the Chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee.

Upon receipt of the documentation of non-compliance, the shelter program must take corrective action within the time limit that is identified in the time frame categories listed on the checklist. The program must submit proof of corrective action to the consultant(s), the Executive Director of MCADV, and the chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee. All changes should be indicated by bold or highlighted text. All changes should have the shelter program board approval, according to the shelter program by-laws. Upon receipt by the consultant(s) of the response to the documentation of non-compliance, the consultant(s) will respond in writing to the chair of the Executive Director of MCADV and the Standards/Ethics Committee if the shelter program has completed all certification requirements. A copy of this documentation will be kept on file in the MCADV office. A certificate verifying compliance with the certification process will be issued by the MCADV office to the shelter program.

If the information received does not meet the criteria of MCADV Minimum Standards, a return visit may be scheduled to provide technical assistance to the shelter, if the assistance cannot be provided via telephone or email. The necessity of a return visit will be determined by the Executive Director of MCADV and the Standards/Ethics Committee. The shelter program is responsible for the expenses incurred if a return visit is necessary.

If the program fails to provide appropriate documentation within the specified time, the Executive Director of MCADV and/or Standards/Ethics Committee will send a certified letter to the shelter board president and the shelter executive director, informing them that the program’s membership in MCADV is on probationary status. If the program fails to reach compliance within thirty (30) days after the specified time, the chairperson of the Standards/Ethics Committee and the President of the MCADV Board will send a jointly signed, certified letter to the shelter board president and executive director, informing them that the shelter program’s membership in MCADV is revoked. If membership is revoked, a shelter program must start the certification process over and reapply for membership.

**X. NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANCE (EMERGENCY)**

If the consultant(s) ascertains that any condition in the shelter program places the clients and/or employees/volunteers in immediate danger, the consultant(s) will provide the shelter program with notification (on the day of the site visit) of non-compliance. The consultant(s) will send a certified letter to the shelter program within 24 hours, notifying them of the specific area(s) in non-compliance. If the shelter program needs further information or guidance, they may contact the Coalition.

The non-compliance conditions must be corrected as specified by the consultant(s) within five (5) calendar days. Upon notification of non-compliance, the consultant(s) must notify the chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee, the Executive Director of MCADV, and the President of the Coalition Board immediately.

Written documentation or proof of compliance must be received by the chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee, the Executive Director of MCADV, the consultant(s), and the President of the Coalition Board within the specified time period.

If necessary, a second visit will be scheduled to review compliance with the Standards. This will be determined by the Chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee and the Executive Director of MCADV. If a second visit is scheduled, the shelter program is responsible for the expenses incurred.

If the program fails to reach compliance within the specified time, the Chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee and the President of MCADV will send a jointly signed, certified letter to the shelter board president and executive director of the shelter program, informing them that the shelter program’s membership in MCADV is revoked. If membership is revoked, the shelter program must start the certification process over and reapply for membership.

**XI. APPEALS PROCESS**

Disagreement with the minimum standards by the shelter program cannot be cause for an appeal. MCADV Minimum Standards are changed and modified through a committee process of the MCADV Board of Directors each year. If the shelter program is dissatisfied with this determination, the following process must be followed.

A letter outlining the grievance should be submitted to the Chair of the Standards/Ethics Committee and the Executive Director of MCADV. This letter should be submitted within 5 working days of receipt of written notification of non-compliance. Within 10 working days of receipt of a grievance, the Standards/Ethics Committee and the Executive Director of MCADV will set a meeting with the shelter program representatives and the Standards/Ethics Committee.

The shelter program must present documentation supporting the basis for their appeal of the Standards Review findings at this meeting. Within 10 working days of this meeting, the Standards/Ethics Committee will submit a reply to the shelter program.

If the matter is not resolved, and the shelter program would like to pursue the appeal, a letter of complaint should be sent to the Chair of MCADV within 10 working days following the receipt of the reply from the Standards/Ethics Committee. Following the receipt of the letter of complaint, at least three representatives of the Executive Committee of MCADV will meet with representatives of the shelter program within 10 working days.

The Executive Committee will submit a written recommendation to the complaining program and to the full board of MCADV within 10 working days of the meeting. The final decision will be made by a 2/3 vote of the governing body of MCADV present at the next scheduled monthly meeting.

The independent consultant(s) shall be available to provide input at the request of the Standards/Ethics Committee and/or the Chair of MCADV.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF STANDARDS/ ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The President of the Coalition Board shall appoint a Standards/Ethics Committee. TheStandards/Ethics Committee is comprised of interested persons who are not members of MCADV. The Executive Director of MCADV will serve as an ad hoc member of this committee. This committee will meet to deal with specific issues as set out above. Due to the sensitive nature of the content discussed during committee meetings only members of the Standards/Ethics Committee and the Executive Director of MCADV will attend the committee meetings.

* 1. **ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE**
1. Review MCADV Minimum Standards and the process for certification.
2. Review site visit reports and make recommendations for compliance. If the Standards/Ethics Committee’s recommendations differ from the consultant(s), the issue will be decided by the Standards/Ethics Committee.
3. Review allegations of ethics violations. This includes allegations by clients, staff, and third parties.
4. Hear appeals regarding Standards/Ethics compliance.
	1. **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Shelter programs are accountable to the population they serve, to funding sources and to the MCADV Standards. The Standards/Ethics Committee will work closely with the consultant(s) and the Executive Director of MCADV.