

The Frequently Asked Questions below may help you answer questions from potential clients of the Visitation Center. The FAQs are intended to support discussion and provide additional context but are not intended for public distribution as content may change.

Frequently Asked Questions

<p>What types of cases are considered for services at the Visitation Center?</p>	<p>The Center will review referrals for cases involving domestic violence. Domestic violence, also referred to as battering, refers to physical abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, stalking, or sexual abuse that takes place in the context of an intimate (or previously intimate) relationship and can involve a pattern of purposeful and assaultive behaviors that can be used to maintain control and compliance of the victim and threatens the safety of the victim and/or child.</p> <p>Center staff will need to know the reasoning for the referral and safety-related information behind the decision. This should be reflected in the notes section on the referral form.</p>
<p>How are services accessed at the Visitation Center?</p>	<p>BCVC may accept client referrals from a variety of sources including court order, domestic violence agencies and hospital-based programs, mental health professionals, attorneys and self-referrals. A Two steps Referral Process is followed*.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Protective order should include a referral to the Visitation Center</u> - Example: “referred to Visitation Center for supervised visitation” OR “referred to Visitation Center for monitored exchange”. 2. <u>Referral form filled out and sent to the clerk’s office</u> - Include a copy in court file and distribute a copy to each party <p>* Non- court ordered referrals would submit a referral form directly to Center staff after ensuring agreement by both parties to voluntarily participate.</p>
<p>Where are the referral forms and how should they be returned to the Center?</p>	<p>Referral forms should be in the court room for use. If a family is being referred for services, complete the form and indicate as part of the order that the parties have been <i>referred to Baltimore City’s Visitation Center for supervised visitation or monitored exchange services</i>.</p> <p>Forms may be faxed or emailed to the Center. Center staff will also pick up forms weekly. If forms have been received for pick-up, please send an email to VisitationCenter@baltimorecity.gov to alert center staff. Faxed forms may be sent to the Center Director Attn: Wendy Lee @ 410-750-3346.</p> <p>Remember place a copy of the referral form in the case file and give each parent a copy of the form with the Center’s contact information for follow-up.</p>

<p>Are there legal services available at the Center for client referrals?</p>	<p>Neither legal services nor legal advice are provided by Center staff; however, a referral to the House of Ruth Legal Clinic may be available on a case by case basis by the Center Director for victims of domestic violence.</p>
<p>Are there bilingual services available?</p>	<p>Interpreter services are available free of charge for families that speak languages other than those spoken by the BCVC employees. Interpreter services will be coordinated by the BCVC staff.</p>
<p>What type of security and safety measures are utilized by the Center?</p>	<p>Staff at the center takes extra precaution to ensure the safety of all parties involved in the execution of these services for families. These measures include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor perimeter sweep of the Center • Designated parking spaces • Camera monitoring • Walkie-talkie use by staff • Secured waiting and visiting rooms • Staggered arrivals and departures • Weapons screening • Police escorts • DV trained and trauma informed BPD TAC team • Zero tolerance for substance and alcohol abuse before and during visits
<p>What are the BCVC Center hours?</p>	<p>Supervised visitation and exchange services are scheduled on a bi-weekly basis on the following days and times*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday: 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.** • Friday: 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. • Saturday: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. • Sunday: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. <p>*Tentative operating hours may be subject to change based upon families' needs and operational capacity.</p> <p>**Not currently staffed based on low demand</p>

<p>Where are the visitation and exchanges services conducted?</p>	<p>Supervised visitation services are on-site sessions conducted at the Family Tree located at 2108 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218.</p> <p>Monitored exchange services are initiated on-site at the Family Tree; however, actual visits occur off-site and are unsupervised by center staff.</p>
<p>Are parents and children able to visit the Center?</p>	<p>An orientation of the Center for each parent and child may occur during the pre-scheduled in person/virtual service agreement meeting. Unplanned visits to the Center must not occur under any circumstances to ensure the safety of all parties.</p>
<p>What information can be shared with parents regarding scheduling?</p>	<p>We ask that referring parties refrain from adding any specific scheduling information in the court order or discussion with parents, such as appointment times, visit frequency, or length of visit. The Center will work with the parties during the intake process to match available appointments with the family's scheduling needs. However; scheduling is limited to staffing availability and operating hours. It may be shared that visits are 1-hour in duration and will occur bi-weekly.</p>
<p>What is the intake process?</p>	<p>Before services can begin, the intake process for each family will include two individual meetings with each parent and Center's staff. The first will occur by phone to gather information and assess whether the Center can safely meet the needs of the family.</p> <p>If accepted, the second meeting will be in person to review the service agreement, schedule dates and times as well as all policies and procedures. Written acknowledgment of the content of this visit is obtained and documented.</p>
<p>How long does the intake process take?</p>	<p>It may take 2-3 weeks for a family to complete the intake process, including the scheduled in person meeting, and be scheduled for services, provided that all parties are timely with their initial contact with Center staff.</p>
<p>What is the make- up of Center staff and what is the Center's capacity for services?</p>	<p>The Center maintains a highly trained, professional staff. The staff of the Center has experience working with children and families and understands the dynamics of domestic violence. Staff includes 1 Director, 3 Supervisors and 6-8 Monitors.</p> <p>The Center schedule may vary depending upon the unique needs of a family. At full capacity, 40-45 families can be accommodated across a bi-weekly schedule.</p>

<p>What type of reporting or documentation will the Center provide and to whom?</p>	<p>It is not the function of the Center to render opinions or recommendations concerning parental rights, qualifications or the quality of a visit. However, the Center will provide a case status report.</p> <p>Upon request of this report by a parent or the court/referring agency, a completed form will be generated and a copy will be stored in the family's case file.</p> <p>The case status report will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case number and reference to any applicable court orders, • Identity of both parents and children, • A log of attendance history and accompanying notes providing a reason for any cancellations, • Reports of critical incidents, and • The case status (continuing to receive services, temporarily suspended, or terminated).
<p>When might services be suspended or terminated?</p>	<p>Services may be temporarily suspended and/or terminated for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety concerns or other case issues that cannot be effectively managed by the Center; • Possession of a weapon by a participant; • Excessive demand on the Center's resources; • The parents' failure to comply with the conditions or rules for participation in the program; and • Threat of or actual violence or abuse
<p>Are there fees for services?</p>	<p>At this time, there are no fees for services provided</p>
<p>Where can I get additional information?</p>	<p>We welcome your feedback. Send your questions and comments to VisitationCenter@baltimorecity.gov.</p> <p>To relay immediate information between the Court and the Center, use of the designated parties for each entity is most effective. Please utilize these parties as your initial point of contact.</p> <p>For all other inquiries or to establish a point of contact for your agency, please call the Center Director, Wendy Lee @ 443-844-8931.</p>

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