

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
September 28, 2021

The Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime met via Microsoft Teams.

Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Judge Laura F. Baldini, Co-Chair Susan Omilian, Melissa Farley, Beth Hamilton, Gail Hardy, Michelle Lettieri on behalf of Bob Garguilo, Amy Lupoli, Irene Mikol, Marc Pelka, Jessica Pizzano, Deborah Witkin, Andrew Woods, Yvette Young

Members Excused or Absent: Ebonie Suggs, Gerrie Wild

OVS Staff in Attendance: Linda J. Cimino, James Morgan, Jean M. Weisbrod

Guest in Attendance: Alison Chandler, Jotham Illuminati, Adam Johnson, Patrick Madden

Agenda:

1. Welcome

Susan Omilian opened the meeting at 2:08 p.m. The Council welcomed Judge Laura Baldini as Co-Chair for the Council, appointed by the Chief Justice, to replace former Co-Chair Judge John Danaher. Other new members were Amy Lupoli, Senior Director of Clinical Services, Klingberg Family Centers, and Marc Pelka, Under Secretary, State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division. Council members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the June 8, 2021 meeting minutes

Susan asked for a motion to accept the June meeting minutes. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented. Judge Baldini abstained.

4. Report on OVS Victimization Needs Assessment

Adam Johnson reported on the project timeline and the 3 different phases which include on-line data collection, an in-depth interview, and focus groups. He reported that the interview questions were drafted to inform OVS about the type of crime experience, services received, demographic information, and what services were found to be helpful. He reported that 466 surveys have been completed as of September 27, 2021.

Adam reported that the electronic version of the survey includes individualized QR codes so the data can be collected from a cell phone. In addition, the phone interviews are conducted in English and Spanish.

The quantitative portion of the project will conclude by mid-November.

Council members discussed ways in which the survey can be used to track trends of crime in Connecticut and compare results to the National Crime Victimization Survey.

The service provider focus groups are scheduled to begin in February 2022 with a final report issued in April 2022.

3. OVS Report

a) Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund Report

The *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 – 2021 through 06/30/2021* and the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 08/31/21 FY 07/01/21 – 06/30/22* were distributed to Council Members via email prior to the meeting.

James Morgan reviewed the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 08/31/21 FY 07/01/21 – 06/30/22*. Jim reported that total disbursements through August 31, 2021 were \$624,370, which is a \$256,750, increase in expenditures through August 31, 2020. Jim reported there were no changes to state appropriations for the new fiscal year which began on July 1, 2021. Jim stated that federal VOCA compensation grants will be used first until state funding revenues begin to improve the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund.

Jim reviewed the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 – 2021*. Jim reported that for State Fiscal Year 2020-2021, OVS received \$727,620, in court collections. He stated that this is a decrease of \$550,603, from State Fiscal Year 2019-2020. Jim reported that 70% of the court collections continue to be through the Centralized Infractions Bureau (CIB) E-Pay for cases that are disposed of online. He stated that total revenues into the CICF from all sources was \$1.3 million below State Fiscal Year 2019-2020 revenues.

b) VOCA Update

James Morgan reported on the *VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021*. Jim reported on the ways in which this law adds a new source of revenue for the Crime Victims Fund and makes changes to formula grants supported by the Fund. The Act contains the following provisions:

- Monetary penalties from federal deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements that were previously deposited into the general fund will now be deposited into the Crime Victims Fund.
- The federal grant calculation for VOCA Victim Compensation Grants was increased from 60% of eligible state expenses to 75% of eligible state expenses.
- Recipients of VOCA funding now have the ability to request No-Cost Extensions to the grant award period.
- States must create and make public a match waiver policy for sub-recipients who wish to request a waiver from the VOCA required 20% match.

- State Administering Agencies must issue match waivers for recipients of VOCA Assistance Grant Funding for the duration of the national emergency pandemic and for one year after it ends.

Jim reported that the OVC released a bulletin on September 30, 2021, clarifying that VOCA Victim Assistance Funds may be used to support community violence intervention efforts, so long as the driving factor of community violence intervention programs is to provide direct services to assist victims of crime. He stated that these direct services may include, but are not limited to, hospital- and community-based violence intervention programs that provide multidisciplinary victim services, such as safety planning, advocacy, trauma-informed care, and ongoing support services and assistance for survivors. These activities were never prohibited under VOCA, however, OVC released the bulletin as clarification that they are allowable under VOCA.

5. OVS Report (continued)

Linda Cimino reported:

- Victim Compensation Program applications processed:

As of September 2021	1494
As of September 2020	1331
As of September 2019	1534
As of September 2018	1695

- The updates to the Policies and Procedures for the Victim Compensation Program has been approved by Judge Carroll.
- SAFE Program training will begin October 4, 2021, via Microsoft Teams. Class enrollment, 15 nurses, represent 4 hospitals and 1 student who will join the Program following the completion of the training session.
- SAFE Program monthly Quality Assurance meetings were maintained via Microsoft Teams.
- The number of SAFEs available for on call and case activation is significantly less due to the significant impact COVID-19 has had on hospital systems.
- Two Victim Services Supervisors started in their new positions September 10, 2021, and both were internal promotions.
- A Deputy Director and full-time Trainer will start their new positions September 22, 2021, and both were internal promotions.
- Interviews for a victim services advocate assigned to the Helpline will be held this week.

- An external job posting (state-wide) for 8 victim service advocates will close Monday, October 4, 2021.

6. Roundtable discussion on legislative proposals and issues on state and federal level

No report provided.

7. Roundtable discussion on how COVID-19 has impacted victim service delivery including vaccination rollout in Connecticut (continued)

Council members discussed issues related to the erosion of victims' rights and how to begin a conversation to raise awareness and bring change. Beth Hamilton offered to host a meeting and will notify Council Members with a date and time. This meeting will be via Microsoft Teams. Updates will be provided at the November 9, 2021, Council meeting.

8. New Business

Susan Omilian reported on the upcoming Avenging Angels Workshops.

Andrew Woods reported that The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO) of the Connecticut General Assembly is holding an inaugural meeting of the Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Advisory Committee scheduled for Wednesday, September 29, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. via ZOOM.

Susan reported that Meghan Scanlon, recently appointed Executive Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), has been invited to attend an upcoming Advisory Council meeting.

Susan reviewed the 2022 meeting schedule that was distributed to Council members via email.

9. Adjournment

Susan adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder