

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
November 9, 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, Beth Hamilton, Amy Lupoli, Irene Mikol, Marc Pelka, Jessica Pizzano, Ebonie Suggs, Gerrie Wild, Deborah Witkin, Andrew Woods, Yvette Young

Members Excused or Absent: Melissa Farley, Bob Garguilo, Gail Hardy

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

Guest in Attendance: Alison Chandler, Adam Johnson, Patrick Madden, Meghan Scanlon

Agenda:

1. Welcome

Susan Omilian opened the meeting at 2:03 p.m. Council members introduced themselves. Invited guest, Meghan Scanlon, recently appointed CEO and President at Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence introduced herself.

2. Approval of the September 28, 2021 meeting minutes

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

3. OVS Report

a) Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund Report

The *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 10/31/21 FY 07/01/21 – 06/30/22* and the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2021 – 2022 through 09/30/2021* were distributed to Council Members via email prior to the meeting.

James Morgan reviewed the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 10/31/21 FY 07/01/21 – 06/30/22*. Jim reported that total disbursements through October 31, 2021, were \$961,000 which is a \$220,000 increase in expenditures compared to October 31, 2020. Jim reported that there are sufficient state and federal funds to cover expenditures for the current year.

Jim reviewed the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2021 – 2022*. Jim reported that \$289,000 in court revenues were received through September 30, 2021, which is \$103,000 higher than court revenues through September 30, 2020. He stated that total revenues into the

CICF from all sources as of October 31, 2021, is \$254,000 higher than what was received through October 31, 2020.

b) OVS Update

Linda Cimino reported on:

o Victim Services Unit

A new victim services advocate was hired and assigned to the Helpline to replace a victim services advocate transferring to the GA 14, Hartford Superior Court.

The interview process to fill 8 vacancies for victim service advocates has concluded.

o Victim Compensation Program

As of the close of October 2021, the number of applications processed is 1,686 which represents 555 more than October 2020. This increase is due in part to a collaboration with the statewide victim service agencies.

There has been an increase in the number of Emotional Injury applications. Unfortunately, many claims have not been eligible for compensation because they do not meet the statutory requirements.

As a result of the increasing number of applications the average case load for each claims examiner is 200, which does not include the older claims that have been reopened.

o SAFE Program

Eleven nurses completed the SAFE training program in October.

o Training

Alexandra Gittines transferred on October 22, 2021, from the Victim Services Unit to fill a vacancy in the Training and Outreach Unit for a full-time trainer. She is assisting in the revision of the Victim Services Advocate Manual which is part of a 40-hour training program. In addition, Alex will lead the Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) and Contractor training sessions.

o Biennial Report

The Biennial Report is due to the Legislature by January 15, 2022 and is currently under development.

4. Report on OVS Victimization Needs Assessment

Adam Johnson, Project Manager, Market Decisions Research, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the project timeline and the 3 different phases which include on-line data collection, in-depth interviews, 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.

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.

Adam reported on race and income demographic information for Project 1. He stated that the information gathered in Project 2 will include an analysis of the in-depth interviews. Adam reported that Project 3 will include the results of Project 1 and 2 and is slated to begin early 2022, with the results expected in April 2022.

Council members discussed issues related to victims of crime with mental health issues and how it impacted reporting the crime and access to services. They discussed the increase in requests for services but a decrease in reports of crime.

5. Roundtable discussions

- a) Legislative proposals and state and federal level issues
 - o Gerrie Wild reported that CCADV has provided training on Coercive Control as outlined in Public Act No. 21-78, *An Act Concerning the Definition of Domestic Violence, Revising Statutes Concerning Domestic Violence, Child Custody, Family Relations Matter Filings and Bigotry or Bias Crimes and Creating A Program to Provide Legal Counsel to Indigents in Restraining Order Cases* and she offered to lead a presentation at the February 8, 2022 Council meeting.
 - o Meghan Scanlon reported that she and Beth Hamilton have drafted a joint letter to be sent to the Governor's office to request one-time temporary financial assistance due the reduction in VOCA funding. She invited other agencies to participate in this request.
 - o Andrew Woods reported on the Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Advisory Committee Public Hearing, Wednesday, November 17, 2021, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. Andrew will distribute information about the public hearing and invited Council Members to submit testimony.
 - o Jessica Pizzano discussed the trend in numbers which indicated a record number of homicides in 2020 despite the lockdown due to the pandemic.
- b) Roundtable discussion on how COVID-19 has impacted victim service delivery including vaccination rollout in Connecticut (continued)
 - o Beth Hamilton stated that she will arrange to meet with a discussion group and will provide a report about the ways COVID-19 has impacted victims at the February 8, 2022 Council meeting.

Judge Baldini reported that tremendous efforts are being made so court trials may move forward.

Council members discussed issues related to a higher number of cases moving to the trial list and plea bargains are less frequent. It was discussed that there's an increased usage of diversionary programs as well. Members discussed how these trends will impact the judicial process for years to come.

Council members discussed issues related to the challenges of sharing information, such as the case status, arraignment information, or orders of protection, with the victims and ways to improve this process. In addition, Council Members discussed issues related to the challenges of handling judicial matters remotely.

6. New Business

February Agenda Items:

- Report by Beth Hamilton on small group discussion
- Presentation by Gerrie Wild on coercive control
- Legislative updates
- Report by Andrew Woods on gun violence
- Update on Victim Needs Assessment

7. Adjournment

Susan adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder