



CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH
OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES
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**To: The Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III
Chief Court Administrator**

**From: The Honorable Laura F. Baldini, Co-Chair
Susan Omilian, Esq., Co-Chair**

Date: December 1, 2021

Subject: 2021 Report of the Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime

Statutory Charge

Connecticut General Statutes § 54-203 (b) (9) directs the Office of Victim Services (OVS) “[t]o provide staff services to a state advisory council. The council shall consist of not more than fifteen members to be appointed by the Chief Justice and shall include the Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner and members who represent victim populations, including but not limited to, homicide survivors, family violence victims, sexual assault victims, victims of drunk drivers, and assault and robbery victims, and members who represent the judicial branch and executive branch agencies involved with victims of crime. The members shall serve for terms of four years. Any vacancy in the membership shall be filled by the appointing authority for the balance of the unexpired term. The members shall receive no compensation for their services. The council shall meet at least four times a year. The council shall recommend to the Office of Victim Services program, legislative or other matters which would improve services to victims of crime and develop and coordinate needs assessments for both court-based and community-based victim services. The Chief Justice shall appoint two members to serve as co-chairpersons. Not later than December fifteenth of each year, the council shall report the results of its findings and activities to the Chief Court Administrator.”

The Advisory Committee met five times, meeting its statutory requirement to meet four times per year via Microsoft Teams. The 2021 meeting schedule is attached.

Council Structure

The 2018 - 2022 Council term began September 1, 2018 and will conclude on August 31, 2022. Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson appointed the Honorable John A. Danaher III, 2018 - 2020, the Honorable Laura F. Baldini, 2021 - 2022, and Susan Omilian, Esq., 2018 - 2022, to serve as co-chairs for the 2018 - 2022 term. The 2021 Council membership list is attached.

The average attendance rate was 83% for 2021 which is slightly lower than the average attendance rate for 2020, which was 86%. Consistent attendance is very important as it allows the Council to discuss and offer recommendations on victim issues and trends. The Advisory Council met via Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The Advisory Council met all requirements as set forth by the Freedom of Information Act and the Public Access Task Force Requirements regarding posting of meeting minutes (both draft and final), agendas, and meeting schedules.

Activities

During this reporting period, the Council discussed legislative initiatives, OVS Victimization Needs Assessment, and how COVID-19 has impacted victim service delivery.

1. OVS Funding Sources

In February:

- The *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 - 2021 Summary of Court Collections through 12/31/2020* and the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 01/31/21 FY 07/01/20 - 06/30/21* and was distributed to Council members via email prior to the meeting. The discussion included the CICF balance and the variations in court collections.
- Council members were provided updates on Federal VOCA Funding.

In April:

- The *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 - 2021 Summary of Court Collections through 02/28/2021* and the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 03/31/21 FY 07/01/20 - 06/30/21* was distributed to Council members via email prior to the meeting. The discussion included the CICF balance and the variations in court collections.
- Council members were provided updates on Federal VOCA Funding.

In June:

- The *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 - 2021 Summary of Court Collections through 04/30/2021* and the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 05/31/21 FY 07/01/20 - 06/30/21* were distributed to Council members via email prior to the meeting. The discussion included the CICF balance and the variations in court collections.
- Council members were provided an update on State VOCA Victim Assistance Grant Allocation for FFY 2021.
- Council members were provided an update on Senate Bill No. 611, VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021.

In September:

- The *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 - 2021 Summary of Court Collections 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. The discussion included the CICF balance and the variations in court collections.
- Council members were provided updates on the *VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021*, the new source of revenue for the Crime Victims Fund created by the law and the changes to formula grants supported by the Fund.
- Council members were informed that the Office for Victims of Crime 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.

In November:

- The *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2021 - 2022 Summary of Court Collections through 09/30/2021* and the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 10/31/21 FY 07/01/21 - 06/30/22* were distributed to Council members via email prior to the meeting. The discussion included the CICF balance and the variations in court collections.

2. OVS Programs and Services

In February:

- Council members were informed of staffing changes in the central office involving the Victim Services Program.
- Council members received information about the SAFE Program clinical training days.

In April:

- No updates or reports were provided.

In June:

- Council members were informed of staffing changes in the central office involving the Victim Services Program.
- Council members were provided an update on the Victim Compensation Program.
- Council members were informed of staffing changes in the SAFE Program.
- Council members were provided information about the benefits of CT SAVIN registration.

In September:

- Council members welcomed Judge Laura F. Baldini, co-chair, 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 to the Advisory Council.
- Council members were informed of various OVS staffing changes that involved hiring 2 Victim Services Supervisors, Deputy Director, and a Trainer.
- Council members were provided an update on the Victim Compensation Program.
- Council members were informed that the updates to the Policies and Procedures for the Victim Compensation Program were approved by Judge Patrick L. Carroll III.
- Council members were informed that the fall SAFE Training would begin October 4, 2021, via Microsoft Teams.

In November:

- Council members welcomed invited guest, Meghan Scanlon, recently appointed CEO and President at Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- Council members were informed of various OVS staffing changes in the Victim Services Program.
- Council members were provided an update on the Victim Compensation Program and some of the issues regarding the increase in the number of claims being processed.

3. Legislative Initiatives

In February:

- Advisory Council members reported on the following legislative initiatives:
 - House Bill No. 5031, *An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses*, which would build pathways to safer colleges and universities,

- House Bill No. 5548, *An Act Concerning Domestic Violence*, which would incorporate language on coercive control for restraining orders,
- House Bill No. 5365, *An Act Concerning Court Operations and Victim Services*, which would allow the continuation of remote applications for temporary restraining orders,
- House Bill No. 5557, *An Act Concerning Human Trafficking*, which would allow victims to petition the court to have the conviction erased if their case was related to victimization due to human trafficking,
- House Bill No. 5019, *An Act Prohibiting the Offering of Sleeping Accommodations at Hotels, Motels or Similar Lodgings at an Hourly Rate and Requiring that Users of Such Places of Public Accommodation Provide the Operator with Positive Proof of Identification*,
- House Bill No. 5677, *An Act Concerning the Availability of Community Violence Prevention Services Under Medicaid*, and
- *Reduce Impaired Driving for Everyone Act (RIDE)* is in the United States Senate This bill requires the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to work with vehicle manufacturers, suppliers, and other entities to advance the technology developed by the Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety Research Program and other advanced drunk driving prevention technology with the goal of integrating such technology into new vehicles.

In April:

- Advisory Council members provided updates on the following legislative initiatives:
 - House Bill No. 5557, *An Act Concerning Human Trafficking*,
 - *Reduce Impaired Driving for Everyone (RIDE) Act* is in the United States Senate,
 - House Bill No. 5677, *An Act Concerning the Availability of Community Violence Prevention Services Under Medicaid*, and
 - House Bill No. 6505, *An Act Concerning Court Operations*.

In June:

- Advisory Council members provided updates on the following legislative initiatives:
 - House Bill No. 6531, *An Act Concerning the Right to Counsel in Eviction Proceedings*,
 - Senate Bill No. 1091, *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*,
 - *The Every Voice Coalition* which filed and passed student and survivor-written, survivor-centered bills in states across the country to end the epidemic of campus sexual violence,
 - Senate Bill No. 1019, *An Act Concerning The Board Of Pardons And Paroles, Erasure Of Criminal Records For Certain Misdemeanor And Felony Offenses, Prohibiting Discrimination Based On Erased Criminal History Record Information And Concerning The Recommendations Of The Connecticut Sentencing Commission With Respect To Misdemeanor Sentences*,
 - House Bill No. 6505, *An Act Concerning Court Operations*, and
 - House Bill No. 5557, *An Act Concerning Human Trafficking*.

In September:

- No updates or reports were provided.

In November:

- A Council member reported that CCADV had 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 offered to lead a presentation at the February 8, 2022 Council meeting.

4. OVS Victimization Needs Assessment

In February:

- Council members were informed that the Request for Proposal for the OVS Victimization Needs Assessment was published on January 14, 2021, and the submission deadline has been extended from February 16, 2021, to February 23, 2021.

In April:

- Council members were informed that the contract award was issued, and the project would begin when the final contract documents have been received. The proposed timeline for the project was discussed.

In June:

- Council members were informed that the OVS Victimization Needs Assessment would include questions about the victims' experience and victimization, how services were received, suggestions to improve services, barriers, household victimizations, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and demographics.

In September:

- Adam Johnson, Market Decisions Research, 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.

In November:

- Adam Johnson provided a PowerPoint presentation on the project timeline and the 3 different phases. Council members were informed that the electronic version of the survey includes individualized QR codes so the data can be collected from a cell phone. It was reported that the phone interviews are conducted in English and Spanish.

5. COVID-19 and the Impact on Victim Services Delivery

In February:

- A Council member reported on behalf of the Judicial Branch External Affairs the various ways the court system is handling matters by virtual means or in person.
- A Council member reported on behalf of the Chief State's Attorney Office of the Division of Criminal Justice the efforts to ensure victims are notified of court proceedings and the combined efforts with CCADV to make police reports available to victim advocates.
- A Council member reported on behalf of the Director of External Affairs Department of Correction that victims are reporting frustration regarding lack of GPS monitoring if offenders are not incarcerated.
- A Council member reported on behalf of Hartford Communities that Care that the agency is responding to basic needs and providing information about testing and vaccinations to victims of

violent crime in the Hartford area through a COVID grant.

In April:

- A Council member reported that the Judicial Branch has followed Connecticut Public Health and Centers for Disease Control guidelines and as restrictions are lifted or modified and more CT residents are vaccinated the Judicial Branch will proceed cautiously and incrementally to increase the scope of business.
- Council members were informed that OVS provided uninterrupted services to victims of crime either by remote or in-person access to victim services advocates.

In June:

- Council members were informed that the Judicial Branch will use remote technology wherever possible to promote efficiencies.

In September:

- Council members discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted victims and their ability to participate in, and have access to, court proceedings. A suggestion was made to form a discussion group to address these issues.

In November:

- Council members were informed that a discussion group will meet and discuss the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted victims and their ability to participate in, and have access to, court proceedings. Council members identified issues related to the court process, including obtaining information about arraignments and case continuance dates and handling judicial matters remotely. A report to the Council will be provided at the February 8, 2022 Council meeting.

cc: Tais C. Ericson, Executive Director of Superior Court Operations
Linda J. Cimino, Director

Office of Victim Services
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
Council Members
2021

Name	Affiliation	State Agency or Victim Population represented
Judge Laura F. Baldini, Co-Chair	Superior Court Judge Judicial Branch New Britain Judicial District	Judicial Branch
Susan Omilian, Esq. Co-Chair	Founder and facilitator of My Avenging Angel Workshop™	Surviving Family Members of Homicide Victims
Gail P. Hardy	Executive Assistant State's Attorney Office of the Division of Criminal Justice	Executive Branch
Melissa Conway (Resigned 03/2021)	Planning Analyst Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division Office of Policy and Management	Office of Policy and Management
Melissa Farley, Esq.	Executive Director External Affairs Judicial Branch	Judicial Branch
Bob Garguilo	Executive Director Mothers Against Drunk Driving	Victims of Drunk Driving
Mikayla Green (Resigned 03/2021)	Program Coordinator Child and Adolescent Trauma Services Klingberg Family Centers	Community Based Mental Health Services
Beth Hamilton	Executive Director Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence	Victims of Sexual Assault
Amy Lupoli	Senior Director of Clinical Services Klingberg Family Centers	Community Based Mental Health Services
Irene Mikol, Esq.	Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner	Judicial Branch
Geraldyn O'Neil-Wild	Director of Legal Advocacy Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Victims of Domestic Violence
Marc Pelka	Under Secretary State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division	Office of Policy and Management
Jessica Pizzano	Director of Victim Services Survivors of Homicide	Survivors of Homicide
Ebonie Suggs	Director of External Affairs Department of Correction Designee	Executive Branch
Deborah Witkin	Executive Director Connecticut Legal Services	Low Income Victims

Andrew Woods	Executive Director Hartford Communities That Care	Non-Profit
Yvette Young	Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team Coordinator The Village for Families and Children, Inc.	Victims of Human Trafficking

Office of Victim Services
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
2021 Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting Platform	Time
Tuesday, February 9, 2021	Microsoft Teams	2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 21, 2021	Microsoft Teams	2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 8, 2021	Microsoft Teams	2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 28, 2021	Microsoft Teams	2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 9, 2021	Microsoft Teams	2:00 - 4:00 p.m.