

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
April 12, 2022

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, Gail Hardy, Irene Mikol, Jessica Pizzano, Jenn Rossi for Bob Garguilo, Ebonie Suggs, Gerrie Wild, Deborah Witkin, Andrew Woods

Members Excused or Absent: Beth Hamilton, Amy Lupoli, Marc Pelka, Yvette Young

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

Guest in Attendance: Alison Chandler, Adam Johnson

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Announcements
Judge Laura Baldini opened the meeting at 2:02 p.m. Council members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of February 8, 2022 meeting minutes
Judge Baldini asked for a motion to accept the February meeting minutes. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented.
3. Report on OVS Victimization Needs Assessment
Adam Johnson reported that the analysis of the in-depth interview process with victims of crime has been completed. The final stage of data collection is underway with service provider focus groups. At this time 6 groups have or will be interviewed, and outreach is continuing for others who can participate.

A report of the final findings will be provided at the June 2022 meeting.

4. OVS Report
 - a) Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund Report
The OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 03/31/22 FY 07/01/21 - 06/30/22 and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund Contribution (CICF) Summary of Court Contributions (P.A. 06-152) through 02/28/2022 FY 07/01/21 - 06/30/2022 were distributed to Council members via email prior to the meeting.

Linda Cimino reviewed the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget Statement for month ending 03/31/22 FY 07/01/21 - 06/30/22*. Linda reported total disbursements through 03/31/22 are \$1,978,800, which is \$278,000 above total disbursements through 03/31/21. She reported that there is

sufficient state and federal funding to make compensation payments for this fiscal year.

Linda reviewed the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund Contribution (CICF) Summary of Court Contributions (P.A. 06-152) through 02/28/2022 FY 07/01/21 – 06/30/22*. Linda reported court contributions through 02/28/22 are \$709,400 which is \$245,000 above collections through 02/28/21. She reported that total revenue into the CICF from all sources as of 03/31/2022, are \$470,000 higher than what was received through 03/31/2021.

b) OVS Update

Mary Kozicki reported:

- Nine recently hired victim services advocates have transitioned into their positions in the courts and Helpline. An In-Service day was held to allow the advocates the opportunity to discuss their experiences with their supervisors and network with each other. An evaluation tool was distributed, and the results will help ensure the best possible experience for future orientations.

Linda Cimino reported:

SAFE Program:

- The Spring training session, which began today, has 22 medical professionals enrolled. The training is a 6-day course of 42 ½ hours of classroom training, a 3-hour (evening) clinical session, an 8-hour (day) session, and an 8-hour mock exam session.

Staffing:

- An office clerk transferred from the Victim Compensation Unit to the Hartford Housing Session;
- An office clerk joined the Victim Compensation Unit to fill the open position;
- A victim services advocate assigned to the Middletown Superior Court retired;
- A victim services advocate transferred from the Milford Superior Court to the Middletown Superior Court to fill the open position.

Victim Compensation Unit:

- 443 applications have been received since 3/31/2022 which is 30 more than the same period last year.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW):

- NCVRW is April 24 – 30 and the theme is *Rights, Access, Equity, for all victims*;
- A series of 6 informational banners will be posted on the Judicial Branch website focusing on the rights of victims.

Council members reported:

- In recent months there has been an increase in referrals for victims between the Victim Compensation Unit and service provider agencies connecting victims to the various services available.

5. Roundtable Discussions

a) Legislative proposals and issues on state and federal level

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) *Priority Bills* and *2022 Policy Priorities* were distributed to Council Members via email prior to the meeting.

Gerrie Wild reported:

- Senate Bill No. 5, *An Act Concerning Online Dating Operators, Online Child Grooming and Harassment, Domestic Violence Training and Protections for Victims of Family Violence and Domestic Violence*.
 - Includes \$1.4 million for domestic violence and child and family advocates;
 - Requires state employees to view a 1-hour virtual training on domestic violence and for employers with 3 or more employees to post information about domestic violence resources;
 - Make “family violence victim” a protected class with respect to employment, house, public accommodations, and credit transactions.
- Senate Bill No. 294, *An Act Concerning Housing Protections for Victims of Family Violence*, which creates an eviction defense for survivors with the intent of preventing evictions based on an incident of domestic violence or a tenant’s status as a victim.

The Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence *2022 Legislative Proposals* and a link to their legislative agenda for the session on their website were distributed to Council Members via email prior to the meeting.

The Alliance’s 2022 Legislative Proposals include:

- Ensure Funding for Victims of Crimes;
- Codify the Definition of Consent for Sexual Assault Crimes;
- Bar Unauthorized Pelvic and Prostate Exams for Patients Under Deep Anesthesia;
- Eliminate the Civil Statute of Limitations for Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, or Sexual Assault;
- Support Child Victims of Sexual Abuse;
- Uphold Reproductive Rights, Seek Reproductive Justice, and Maintain Access to Services.

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch External Affairs Division, A Summary of and a link to Raised Bill No. 5393, *An Act Concerning Court Operations*, were distributed to Council Members via email prior to the meeting.

Jessica Pizzano reported:

- Raised Bill No. 434, *An Act Concerning Court Processes Associated with the Announcement of a Verdict in a Criminal Proceeding*, and how it impacts victims and survivors of crime.

Andrew Woods reported:

- Senate Bill No. 477, *An Act Concerning the Public Health of Residents of the State*, specifically, on Section 7: Establishing a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to coordinate the funding and implementation of evidence-based, evidenced-informed, community-centric gun violence prevention and intervention programs and strategies.

Linda Cimino reported:

- Raised House Bill No. 5238, *An Act Expanding Eligibility for the Victim Compensation Program*, which would include incidents of child abuse or neglect substantiated by the Department of Children and Families.
- Raised House Bill No. 5154, *An Act Requiring the Provision of Information Concerning Children's Mental Health and Domestic Violence by Police Officers*, which would require emergency service providers to distribute information about resources available to children and victims of domestic violence.

b) Impact of COVID-19 on victim service delivery including vaccination rollout in Connecticut (continued)

No reports provided.

6. New Business

Debi Witkin reported that the Pro Bono Restraining Order Project which will provide legal representation to victims of domestic violence will begin soon in the Stamford/Norwalk, Fairfield, Waterbury, Hartford, and New Haven Judicial Districts.

Linda reported that the June meeting is the last of the 2018-2022 term for the Advisory Council. She stated that the current Council Members have agreed to remain for the 2022-2026 term.

Susan reported on upcoming Fall 2022 My Avenging Angels workshops she conducts free of charge to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse to help them take the journey from victim to survivor to thriver. More info on the workshops at www.MyAvengingAngel.com.

Susan reported on the training sessions that she will be providing in June 2022 to CCADV and The Alliance member programs to increase their awareness of the My Avenging Angel Workshops.

Jessica Pizzano reported that Survivors of Homicide, Inc. will provide a presentation for NCVRW at the program hosted by the Office of the Victim Advocate.

June agenda items:

- Final Report on OVS Victimization Needs Assessment

7. Adjournment

Susan adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder