

**MINUTES**  
**Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime**  
**April 21, 2021**

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

**Members in Attendance:** Co-Chair Susan Omilian, Melissa Farley, Bob Garguilo, Beth Hamilton, Irene Mikol, Sharmese Walcott, Deborah Witkin, Andrew Woods, Yvette Young

**Members Excused or Absent:** Melissa Conway, Jessica Pizzano, Ebonie Suggs, Gerrie Wild

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

**Guests in Attendance:** Alison Chandler, Adam Lippencott, CT-N

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome  
Susan Omilian opened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. Council members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of the February 9, 2021 meeting minutes  
Susan asked for a motion to accept the February meeting minutes. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented.
3. Roundtable discussion on legislative proposals and issues on state and federal level  
Beth Hamilton provided an update on:
  - Legislation to build pathways to safer colleges and university campuses
  - Legislation to bar unauthorized pelvic and prostate exams for patients under deep anesthesia
  - Legislation, in partnership with CCADV, requiring landlords to change, or allow a tenant to change, locks upon their tenant's receipt of a protective or restraining order
  - Expansion of the definition of coercive control  
Deb Witkin provided an update on:
  - HB No. 5557 and Human Trafficking Vacatur Laws which recognize that trafficking victims are not responsible for the criminal activity in which they have been forced to engage

Bob Garguilo provided an update on 8/6:

- The Halt Act which passed in Congress and would mandate that all auto manufacturers activate a system to detect impaired driving that is installed in all new vehicles

Sharmese Walcott provided an update on:

- HB No. 5557 – An Act which would make it easier for victims to have a conviction erased if their case is related to victimization due to human trafficking

Andrew Woods provided an update on:

- HB No. 5677 - An Act Concerning Medicaid Violence Preventative Services which could make violence preventative services provided by a qualified violence prevention professional a covered benefit under the Medicaid program, subject to utilization controls

Melissa Farley provided an update on:

- HB No. 6505 – An Act Concerning Court Operations which would allow the continuation of remote applications for temporary restraining orders.
- HB No. 5557 and Human Trafficking Vacatur Laws

Valina Carpenter provided an update on:

- HB No. 6505 – An Act Concerning Court Operations which would allow victims and family members to attend juvenile court transfer proceedings

Yvette Young provided an update up on:

- HB 5557 - An Act that would change the language of existing legislation regarding sexual abuse of a minor from “for a fee” to “in exchange for anything of value”. This bill would also create a focus on affirmative defense for trafficking victims

4. Report on OVS Victimization Needs Assessment

Linda Cimino reported that 4 submissions from vendors were received before the deadline of April 21, 2021. The review committee, which consisted of 4 members, met on March 22, 2021, and the contract award was issued on April 16, 2021. The project will begin when the final contract documents have been received.

Proposed timeline for the project:

Months 1 – 5	Develop and implement a statewide victimization survey to individuals
Months 6 – 8	Interview victims of crime in all communities

Months 9 – 11	Engage in focus groups with victim service providers

5. OVS Report

a) Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund Report

The *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 – 2021* and the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 03/31/21 FY 01/01/20 – 06/30/21* were distributed to Council Members via email prior to the meeting.

James Morgan reviewed the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2020 – 2021*. Jim reported court contributions were \$464,528 through 02/28/21. Jim stated this was \$606,125 below total court collections through 02/28/20. Jim reported that the majority of the court collections continue to be through the Centralized Infractions Bureau (CIB) E-Pay for cases that are disposed of online. Jim stated that overall revenues into the CICF fund from all sources are \$1.5 million below collections for the same time last fiscal year.

James Morgan reviewed the *OVS Victim Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 03/31/21 FY 01/01/20 – 06/30/21*. Jim reported that total disbursements through March 31, 2021 were \$1,701,013, which is \$201,000 below expenditures through March 31, 2020. Jim stated that Federal VOCA compensation grants were used to supplement state funding to offset declines in revenues into the CICF. Jim reported there is sufficient state and federal funding to make compensation payments for this year.

b) OVS Update

James Morgan provided an update on Federal VOCA Funding:

- Due to declining deposits into the federal Crime Victims' Fund (CVF), the FFY 21 appropriation from the CVF will be approximately \$2B, which is a reduction of 24% from FFY 2020
- The National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators estimates that formula funding to each state will decrease by 35% from the FFY 20 award, which would put Connecticut's FFY 21 award at a 6-year low of under \$12,000,000
- After the FY 21 awards have been granted to the states, the CVF balance will be reduced to approximately \$2B at the end of this federal fiscal year (September 30, 2021). This could lead to additional reductions in federal appropriations in FFY 22
- H.R. 1652 and S. 611, *VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021*, were introduced in the US House and Senate. The proposed legislation would direct federal criminal settlements from non-prosecution

and deferred prosecution agreements, currently deposited into the General Treasury, into the CVF. The National Association of VOCA Administrators estimates that this change could add \$4 - 7 Billion to the Fund over the next few years. It passed the House of Representatives on March 17, 2021, and has not yet been voted on by the Senate

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

Melissa Farley reported:

- 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
- Currently closed are GA 5 at Derby, GA 10 at New London, GA 12 at Manchester, Windham JD at 155 Church St, Putnam, and Juvenile Matters at Rockville at 25 School Street.
- Courthouse staff members are returning to their locations in a staggered manner to maintain social distancing. The goal is to have the courthouse locations at capacity and fully operational within the next few months

Linda Cimino reported:

- OVS provided uninterrupted services to victims of crime either by remote or in-person access to victim services advocates. The objective is for all victim services advocates to be returned to the courthouses by May 23, 2021
- Domestic violence victim advocates were able to continue services through technology that the Judicial Branch made available and by partnering with the Office of Adult Probation

Beth Hamilton reported:

- Trends in diminutive sentences, victim notification challenges, and general lack of access to technology which limits victims' ability to be part of the process.

7. New Business.

No new business was reported.

8. Adjournment

Susan adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder