

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
November 12, 2024
225 Spring Street, Room 4B, Wethersfield, CT

Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Judge Courtney M. Chaplin, Lisa D'Angelo, Emily Burnett, Amy Lupoli, Beth Hamilton, Irene Mikol, Susan Omilian, Jessica Pizzano, Deborah Witkin, Andrew Woods

Members Absent: Co-Chair Yvette Young, Michelle Chamberlain, Lee Ross, Ebonie Suggs, Gerrie Wild

Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services (JB-OVS) Staff in Attendance: Marc Pelka, Jolita Lazauskas, Jean M. Weisbrod

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Announcements

Judge Chaplin called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Council and JB-OVS staff members made introductions.

2. Approval of the June 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes

The minutes were not approved due a lack of a quorum and will be presented at the next meeting.

3. Victim Notification Overview

A PowerPoint by Marc Pelka provided an overview of the victim notification programs.

The presentation covered ways victim notification programs help victims:

- Receive information regarding developments in a criminal case, changes in inmate status, and other events
- Exercise their state constitutional and statutory rights including participating in hearings
- Seek advocacy and services, including the development of a safety plan.

Also, the presentation provided a detailed explanation of three categories of the victim notification programs:

- Automated (VINE)
- Manual (JB-OVS Victim Notification and Department of Correction Victim Services Unit)
- Generated Letters (e.g., notification regarding an expiring order of protection)

The presentation and discussion explored opportunities to provide greater clarity, consistency, and simplicity to victims regarding notification programs.

4. Victim of Crime Act Funding Update

Marc provided an overview of the federal picture involving the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) and VOCA Assistance; the impact on Connecticut; and Connecticut's FY 2026 VOCA Assistance grant process, which will include a request for proposal for VOCA Assistance services commencing July 1, 2025.

Marc reported that as of July 31, 2024, the CVF is \$3.27 billion, which is higher than the FY 2021 to 2023 year-end balances, but 60% of the funding (\$1.51 billion) is impacted by ongoing litigation relating to two large federal settlements. The federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has deposited the settlement funds in the CVF but has indicated it will not make any grant allocations using the funds until the litigation is resolved. Further information and clarity are expected to be offered by the OVC director at a November 14 update.

5. Legislative Updates and Implementation Planning

A discussion occurred discussing perspectives that victims have offered regarding the importance of a standing criminal protective order being issued at the time of sentencing for homicide cases to provide victims with safety and security, especially in the event the individual is later released or discharged from prison.

6. New Business

Susan Omilian distributed information about the *My Avenging Angel Workshops*™. She noted efforts with the Center for Victim Research to apply for an Office on Violence Against Women-sponsored grant to evaluate programs addressing gender-based violence that are providing emerging innovations using healing interventions.

7. Adjournment

Judge Chaplin adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder