

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
December 9, 2025
225 Spring Street, Room 4B, Wethersfield, CT

Members in Attendance: Co-chair Yvette Young, Anne Louise Blanchard (designee for Deborah Witkin), Emily Burnett, Lisa D'Angelo, Beth Hamilton, Brittany Kaplan, Irene Mikol, Andrew Woods

OVS Staff in Attendance: Colette Donnelly, Alexandra Gittines, Dr. Kristina Barbato, Marc Pelka

Guest in Attendance: Maria Ortiz, Cinthia Ravies, and Deanna Dorkins

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Announcements

Co-Chair, Yvette Young, opened the meeting.

Introductions of council members, OVS staff, and guests.

2. Approval of October 28th, 2025, Meeting Minutes

The minutes as presented were approved by a voice vote. Irene Mikol, Lisa D'Angelo, Anne Louise Blanchard, and Andrew Woods abstained.

3. Presentation of OVS Victim Services Unit: Victim Advocacy in courts and other areas

Dr. Kristina Barbato, Victim Services Unit Program Manager, presented on the Victim Services Unit, including the advocacy and notification programs. Barbato explained the rights of crime victims, the role of an OVS Victim Services Advocate (VSA), and the distinctions between OVS VSAs and other community-based victim advocates.

The staffing structure and supervision coverage was reviewed, highlighting the challenges and opportunities of statewide coverage and support. Current staffing is based on existing resources and case volume. VSAs are stationed at all adult criminal courts, at the Board of Pardons and Paroles, within Central Office operating a statewide Helpline, and they provide regional coverage of juvenile matters courts.

OVS has notification programs that provide victims information about their case, help them safety plan, and helps them exercise their constitutional rights within the criminal justice process. VINE is the primary notification system, providing free, confidential notification of court dates, inmate status, and changes to orders of protection. A post-conviction notification program provides updates to victims regarding certain proceedings of convicted inmates. OVS also provides notification to protected parties

regarding the expiration or termination of orders of protection. Separately, the Department of Correction provides notification to registered victims.

Example of Victim Services Unit 2026 initiatives include IT improvements, expansion in data collection and reporting, and simplify and streamline administrative tasks.

4. Discussion: Coordinating Victim Advocacy & Services

There was discussion regarding potential redundancy in post-conviction notification, with information to victims coming from multiple agencies, potentially with inconsistent content. There was additional discussion of specific notification events, such as Habeas filings, sentence modifications, and federal cases.

Collaboration between OVS VSAs and community-based advocates, especially in jurisdictions with high volume and/or high-intensity cases, is essential. The benefits of connecting victims to supports outside of the court process, coordinating care and providing clear and consistent messaging were also highlighted in the discussion.

5. 2026 Advisory Council Planning

The 2026 Advisory Council meeting schedule was proposed with the required minimum of four meetings per year. The topic of adding new members to the Advisory Council were discussed including representatives of the hospitals or medical centers

6. Member Program Updates

Preparations are underway for the 2026 legislative session.

OVS partnered with Survivors of Homicide to recognize Survivors of Homicide Awareness Month with virtual training. Additionally, on November 20, an array of policymakers, victims and their advocates, and other supporters held a press conference commemorating Survivors of Homicide Awareness Month. The press conference is available to watch on CT-N.

CT Legal Services is collaborating with St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport to provide legal services for patients. This includes screening for domestic violence and providing DV resources and information.

The Village for Families and Children and CT Legal Services are together assisting victims and other individuals with the Affordable Care Act Open Enrollment period, which runs from November 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026.

An update will be provided after further consultation with the Office of the Attorney General regarding litigation involving conditions in VOCA Assistance grant program.

7. New Business

None

8. Adjournment

Young adjourned the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

Colette Donnelly, Recorder

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