

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
April 23, 2024
225 Spring Street, Room 4B, Wethersfield, CT

Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Judge Courtney M. Chaplin, Co-Chair Yvette Young, Lisa D'Angelo, Emily Burnett, Beth Hamilton, Nilda Havrilla for Deb Witkin, Amy Lupoli, Irene Mikol, Jessica Pizzano, Jennifer Rossi for Bob Garguilo

Members Excused or Absent: Susan Omilian, Lee Ross, Ebonie Suggs, Gerrie Wild, Andrew Woods

OVS Staff in Attendance: Mary Kozicki, James Morgan, Marc Pelka, Jean M. Weisbrod

Guest in Attendance: Erin Williamson

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Announcements

Co-Chair, Judge Chaplin, opened the meeting at 2:03 p.m.
Council and OVS Staff members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the February 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented. Lisa D'Angelo, Nilda Havrilla, and Jennifer Rossi abstained because they were not present for the February 6, 2024, meeting.

3. Legislative Updates

Amy Lupoli reported on *An Act Concerning Mental Health Services for Young Children, Their Caregivers, Expectant Mothers and Pregnant Persons (House Bill 5454)*, to maximize federal resources for mental health services for young children, their caregivers, and pregnant persons.

Nilda Havrilla reported on Connecticut Legal Services' support for section 1 of *AAC Victims of Domestic Violence, The Unsolicited Transmission of Intimate Images by Means of An Electronic Communication Device and The Impermissible Use Of Nondisclosure Agreements In The Workplace* (Senate Bill 4), which would expand the judicial districts that may receive legal services from the restraining order grant program (currently, Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford-Norwalk, and Waterbury) to include Danbury, Middlesex, and Litchfield. Havrilla also spoke to policies Connecticut Legal Services supports in other pending bills.

Beth Hamilton reported on the development of a sexual assault bill to increase the rights of survivors and the response by the criminal justice system, a Criminal Justice Response sexual assault model policy, extending the antidiscrimination protections, and (paid and not paid) FMLA for victims. She also reported on

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support for specific bills: *AAC The Criminal Justice Response to Victims of Sexual Assault* (HB 5399), *AAC Child Sexual Abuse Raised Bill* (HB 5262), and *An Act Clarifying the Meanings of Sexual Intercourse and Sexual Contact* (HB 5298).

Jennifer Rossi reported on *An Act Reducing the Blood Alcohol Limits for Impaired Driving and Boating and Studying Methods to Detect Cannabis-Impaired Driving* (SB 424) to lower the blood alcohol content for driving and boating under the influence from eight-hundredths to five-hundredths of one per cent of alcohol, by weight.

Marc Pelka reported on *AAC Court Operations* (SB 426) to permit a victim to make a statement to the court prior to the acceptance of any plea agreement, not only in instances when the defendant pleads to a lesser offense, and to make certain revisions to the Victim Compensation Program, including the elimination of the requirement to report an offense to the police within 5 days, extending the time period to file a claim for compensation from 2 to 3 years, and removing the requirement that a victim receive treatment through services in order to demonstrate emotional harm.

Mary Kozicki elaborated on the summary of *An Act Concerning Court Operations*, which could expand the CT Advisory Council for Victims of Council to not more than 20 members, including members that represent victims of gun violence.

4. Roundtable Discussion of Victim Notification Programs

Mary reported that the goal is to create victim notification programs that are efficient, effective, and victim-centered tools, and to review current messaging to identify opportunities for increased consistency.

Members discussed issues related to victims choosing to not be notified, the processes to locate victims many years after the disposition and sentencing of the case, child victims whose parents chose not to be notified, and trauma-informed notification.

5. Victim of Crime Act Funding Update

Mary Kozicki noted that printed copies of the *Connecticut Victims' Needs Assessment*, produced by Market Decisions Research, are available at the meeting for members.

Marc Pelka provided a PowerPoint presentation, *VOCA Assistance Overview and Update*.

The presentation included information regarding:

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- Federal Crime Victim Fund Overview
- VOCA Allocations to Connecticut
- Impact of VOCA Funding in Connecticut

6. Discussion on VOCA Funding

Council members discussed issues related to identifying additional sources to fund victim services. Members will continue to discuss the impact of anticipated reduced funding on victim services, ways to collaborate, and options to mitigate these impacts.

6. New Business

Mary thanked the agencies that participated in the *Connecticut Service Provider Spotlight* in recognition of the *2024 National Crime Victims' Rights Week*.

Yvette reported on the *Response to Recovery Conference*, May 8 – May 9th.

Jessica reported on the fundraiser to benefit *Survivors of Homicide* at *Texas Roadhouse* in Waterbury, April 25th (4:00 – 8:00 p.m.).

Amy reported on *Connecticut Foodshare's Walk Against Hunger* on May 4 at *Dunkin' Park* in Hartford.

7. Adjournment

Yvette Young adjourned the meeting at 3:53 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder