

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
September 12, 2023
225 Spring Street, Room 4B, Wethersfield, CT

Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Judge Courtney M. Chaplin, Co-Chair Yvette Young, Lisa D'Angelo, Beth Hamilton, Amy Lupoli, Irene Mikol, Susan Omilian, Marc Pelka, Lee Ross, Gerrie Wild, Andrew Woods

Members Excused or Absent: Bob Garguilo, Jessica Pizzano, Deborah Witkin, Ebonie Suggs

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

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Announcements
Co-Chair, Yvette Young, opened the meeting at 3:15 p.m.
Council and OVS Staff members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of the June 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes
The minutes were approved as presented.
3. Overview of OVS Programs and Services
Alex Gittines provided a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of OVS Programs and Services.

Council members discussed issues related to the criminal court process for victims of crime.

4. Legislative Updates
Mary Kozicki reported that the Judicial Branch has begun initial discussions on potential legislative proposals for the upcoming Session.

Gerrie Wild reported that Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence is in the process of drafting proposals for the upcoming Session.

Gerrie reported on *Public Act No. 23-106, An Act Strengthening the Protections Against and Response to Domestic Violence*, which includes a GPS program that is expected to be effective statewide as of October 2025. The courts that have been identified to participate in the first phase of the program are Derby, New Haven, and Milford Superior courts.

Gerrie reported on *Public Act No. 23-136, An Act Concerning the Establishment and Duties of the Domestic Violence Criminal Justice Response and Enhancement Advisory Council*.

Lisa D'Angelo reported that informational presentations about this GPS program will be provided at upcoming State's Attorney's and Chief of Police meetings.

Beth Hamilton reported that the CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence as part of the *Trafficking in Persons Council* is working to identify a path forward to re-introduce

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legislation to add all victims of crime to the state's protected classes. In 2022, they proposed adding victims of sexual violence and trafficking to the existing protection for victims of domestic violence but have found other states who have added all victims of crime and will be pursuing that this year. Initial meetings have taken place with legislators and the *CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities* who are both supportive of exploring the policy.

Andrew Woods reported on the *Commission on Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention* meeting to be held Wednesday, September 13, 2023, and will be facilitated by the Department of Public Health. An update will be provided to the Council.

5. Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) Funding Update

Mary Kozicki reported on the *2023 VOCA National Joint Training Conference* of Victim Assistance and Crime Victim Compensation Administrators. At that conference, Office for Victims of Crime Director, Kris Rose, indicated that it is expected the Crime Victims Fund balance will be at \$1.3 billion to begin FY 2024 - 2025, which will cover the House and Senate budget request of \$1.2 billion. With this expected Fund balance, it was noted by Director Rose that VOCA assistance grants will likely see a 40% reduction in funding. This reduction is in addition to prior reductions.

Connecticut has been able to maintain current funding levels at \$29.49 million for current contracts through the utilization of *American Rescue Plan Act* (ARPA) funds, which expire on December 31, 2024. This 40% reduction, and the expiration of ARPA funds, could potentially result in a FY 2025 - 2026 Connecticut VOCA assistance grant of approximately \$8 million.

Council members discussed issues related to advocating for additional sources to fund victim services. Members will continue to discuss different funding sources and the impact of possible reduced funding on victim services.

6. New Business

Susan Omilian distributed information about *My Avenging Angel Workshops*™

7. Adjournment

Yvette adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder