

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
October 4, 2022

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

Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Judge Laura F. Baldini, Co-Chair Yvette Young, Anne Louise Blanchard, Lisa D'Angelo, Beth Hamilton, Michelle Lettieri, Irene Mikol, Jessica Pizzano, Maurie W. Reaves, Ebonie Suggs, Gerrie Wild

Members Excused or Absent: Bob Garguilo, Amy Lupoli, Marc Pelka, Lee Ross, Deborah Witkin, Andrew Woods

OVS Staff in Attendance: Alexandra Gittines, James Morgan, Jean M. Weisbrod

Guest in Attendance: Adam Lippincourt, Michael Snyder

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Announcements

Co-Chair, Judge Laura Baldini, opened the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

She welcomed new and returning Council Members to Term 2022-2026.

Yvette Young was introduced as the newly appointed Co-Chair.
Council members and guests introduced themselves.

Following Agenda Item #5, Judge Baldini thanked Susan Omilian for her years of service as Co-Chair and for continuing to serve as a Council Member. Susan made remarks regarding her pleasure to serve as Co-Chair with Judge Baldini and Judge Danaher and she expressed her gratitude to the OVS staff for their support.

2. Approval of April 12, 2022, and June 28, 2022, Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

3. Statutory Charge

Judge Baldini reviewed CGS (§) 54-203(b)(9).

4. Victimization Survey Update

No report was provided.

5. Victim of Crime Act Funding Update

James Morgan reported:

- The U.S Dept. of Justice Office for Victims of Crime oversees the federal Crime Victims Fund (the Fund), which provides funding to numerous federal and state funded victim services programs including the VOCA Victim Assistance and VOCA Compensation grants.
- Each of the 50 states and 6 U.S. territories receive VOCA funding from OVC to provide free services to victims of crime.
- At the beginning of FFY 2018, the fund balance of the Fund was \$13.082 billion. Over the past four federal fiscal years deposits into the fund decreased, and at the start of FFY 2022, the fund balance was down to \$3.028 billion.
- The decrease in deposits into the Fund and the declining fund balance necessitated reductions in the VOCA Assistance grant award.
- In FFY 21, the OVS victim assistance grant was \$11.7 million, which was a reduction of 67% from our FFY 2018 award of \$36.4 million.
- The reduction in VOCA funding and the negative impact on the provision of services to victims of crime in CT was the primary reason that the Judicial Branch included a \$14.5 million request for victim services funding using federal American Rescue Plan Act funds for the current fiscal year.
- To address the reduction in receipts and funding, Congress passed, and the President signed a bill called The VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021 (VOCA Fix), which became effective 7/22/21. The VOCA Fix legislation was intended to “direct (to the Fund) federal criminal settlements from non-prosecution and deferred prosecution agreements.
- When the legislation was passed, it was projected that the additional funding sources would add “\$4 - 7 billion into the fund over the next several years.”
- FFY 2022 ended on September 30. As of August 31, deposits into the fund totaled \$814 million. Over half of those deposits were from deferred prosecutions and non-prosecution agreements, so the VOCA Fix is starting to have an impact on the deposits.
- In recent remarks made in September, Kristina Rose, Director of OVC stated: *“For the period 7/22/21-6/30/22 approximately \$500 million has been deposited into the Fund. The latest data show the current balance of the CVF at just over \$3 billion, which includes all deposits and collections through the end of July. After we have completed making our FY 2022 grants, OVC anticipates that the balance of the Fund will be between \$1.1 and \$1.3 billion*

on October 1st. And this is the funding that will be used for our Fiscal Year 2023 victim services programming. Now the Fiscal Year 2023 President's Budget and the FY 2023 Senate mark have set the CVF obligation cap at \$1.75 billion, which, as it stands right now, will leave a deficit of roughly \$450 to \$650 million. It's possible that receipts over the coming fiscal year will enable us to meet the \$1.75 billion cap. However, as you know, it's impossible to predict the future."

- OVS will keep the Council up to date with the status of the federal Crime Victims Fund.

6. New Business

- Collaboration
 - Susan Omilian reported on the *My Avenging Angels* workshops and a *Train the Trainer* program.
 - Jessica Pizzano reported that registration is now open for the *Building Bridges with Survivors and the Criminal Justice System* conference on October 20, 2022, at the Marriott Hotel, Cromwell, sponsored by the Petit Family Foundation.
 - Gerrie Wild reported that CCADV and its member programs have been collaborating with Rachel McKnight to share information about the OVS Victim Compensation Program.
 - Beth Hamilton suggested considering new ways to collect and share data about victim services.
 - Yvette reported that the meetings will continue to include presentations from various victim services providers and members will be contacted individually to share information about their agencies.
 - Yvette reported that for the Advisory Council 2022 – 2026 Term the September meeting will be in-person at OVS, 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, and the other four meetings will continue to be via Microsoft Teams.
- Good news
 - Jessica reported that Survivors of Homicide (SOH) was awarded a grant from The MrBallen Foundation which provides solutions for victims and organizations that provide support to them through financial support and resources. These funds will be used to support the court meals program offered to crime victims by SOH during court proceedings.

7. Adjournment

Yvette adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder