

## **Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission**

### **Victim Issues Subcommittee Minutes**

**January 20, 2021**

**10-11:30am**

**Hosted on Microsoft Teams**

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Marc Pelka, Chair, Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission, presided over the meeting in lieu of the committee chair who had a scheduling conflict.

Liza Andrews, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV); Linda Cimino, Office of Victim Services (OVS); Melissa Conway, Office of Policy & Management (OPM); Maura Crossin, Program Director CT Alliance & Victims Right Center of CT (The Alliance); Lucy Nolan, CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence (The Alliance); Jessica Pizzano, Survivors of Homicide (SOH); Leeland Moore for Richard Sparco, Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP); Ebony Sugs, Department of Correction; Nina Vazquez, CT Alliance & Victims Right Center of CT (The Alliance).

#### **Welcome**

Marc Pelka, welcomed members in attendance via the Microsoft Teams Virtual platform. The agenda was reviewed and it was acknowledged that it was a possibility that not all agenda items would be covered during this meeting. Designees present were asked to introduce themselves.

#### **Victimization Survey Update**

Marc and Melissa Conway (OPM) were excited to share that the process for the victimization survey has moved along quickly. Evaluating crime and victimization will help the state determine if the current services and processes in place are effective. National models and local examples have provided the group with valuable insight and assisted in the development and finalization of the RFP.

Linda Cimino (OVS) was happy to report that the RFP was finalized and posted on the judicial website. She provided an overview of the lengthy document summarizing the key components. The core language for the scope of services we are seeking can be found on pages 18-24. The scope can be broken down into three parts.

1. **Accurate Reporting:** Intent is to report accurately as to whether crime is down as it is reported on the federal and state level. Crime victimization is not always reported and therefore cannot be represented in the figures used that state rates of crime have increased or decreased. This will be the first step of an ongoing process to really learn how crime victims report crimes, how the crime affects them and the services provided.
2. **Underserved Populations:** How can we ensure all services and resources are made available to all constituents. Getting accurate data will not only help ensure

appropriate services are available it will help secure more funding to ensure outreach and services are far reaching.

3. Structural: This component will gauge if the services of OVS and service providers are beneficial.
  - a. Do outreach methods make sense?
  - b. What are the needs of crime victims?
  - c. Are we providing the services needed?
  - d. What are the barriers to access assistance?

Page 19 outlines expectations. Questions from interested parties can be submitted through 2/5/2021. Deadline for submissions is 2/16/2021 2:30 p.m. The project will run from March 1, 2021 – March 2022.

Linda shared how pleased she was with the turnaround time for this project because in her experience it is not common. As we are in the final stages of seeking experts to help us move forward with executing this project more insight will be sought from committee members and service agencies – all groups will play a significant role in gathering data and reaching victims of crime. Overall this data is going to be helpful in many ways. Linda mentioned reaching out to Beth Hamilton regarding the agency that assisted the Alliance in its rebranding efforts, Lucy Nolan (Alliance) stated she would get that information for Linda.

Lucy Nolan (Alliance) shared how valuable this data will be to craft policy, legislation and serve victims better. Linda also stated that this information will be extremely valuable to federal and state funding that will help the working relationships in place to provide the very best for victims. Maura Crossin (Alliance & VRCCT) echoed her excitement that this was a necessary step to reach underserved populations. She posed the question if considerations regarding the current state of the pandemic have been taken in how the survey will be conducted. Linda said that issue has been considered and will be addressed. Linda also stated that compensation in some form for participant's time is also a consideration, perhaps in the form of a gift card, etc. It is very important that our approach with this survey is one of accessibility, compassion, and empowerment to the victim community.

Please feel free to share the judicial website link regarding the RFP with any organizations that may be interested in the project.

### **Legislative plans for 2021**

Lucy Nolan shared that along with monitoring bills that come out, the Alliance with the assistance of Rep. Jillian Gilchrest are working on codifying the definition of consent as it relates to sexual assaults. The Supreme Court recently defined consent as capable, deliberate and voluntary. The Alliance is also continuing the work with higher education institutions and "Every Voice Counts" regarding surveying and reporting. They are going into the 3<sup>rd</sup> year regarding the change lock bill, monitoring the reform bill and statute of limitations. Lucy stated it has been difficult connecting with members of the judiciary committee and our focus will continue to ensure crime victims' voices are present in bills raised that will affect them in anyway.

Marc Pelka shared that the clean slate bill will not be introduced this session. The auto erasure in cannabis bill will focus on those with a record of possession. He will be monitoring this closely and SB 403, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES, ERASURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS FOR CERTAIN MISDEMEANOR AND FELONY OFFENSES AND PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON ERASED CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION.

Liza Andrews from CCADV shared that they were advised to present proposals and changes in one bill, therefore CCADV has issued a very comprehensive bill that includes items that were not addressed from the 2020 session, as well as the continuation of the online restraining order process which is also supported in the court operations bill. Other items covered include training, the release of family training program information from the judicial branch, police reports regarding violations of restraining orders and orders of protection, flagging violation cases to be expedited, U Visa, waivers for DV victims to apply for state assistance so they can remain in their homes, and removing names of protected victims off the public voter and insurance lists.

Maura Crossin from the Alliance and VRCCT mentioned how impressed she was with the panel discussion on trafficking that was hosted by Joette Katz and mentioned that the bill has momentum and that she will continue to monitor it.

Jessica Pizzano from Survivors of Homicide shared that she will be monitoring proposals and will reach out for support if needed.

Vanessa Torres from the OVA shared that the agency is also monitoring proposals. If members want to share any specific language regarding legislation, please send via email.

Linda from OVS shared an overview of their legislative priorities:

1. Section 16 amends section 46b-15 to remove the requirement that an affidavit, made under oath, stating the conditions from which relief is sought accompany an application for a temporary restraining order, and instead requires that a statement of the conditions from which relief is sought be made under penalty of false statement pursuant to section 53a-157b accompany an application;
2. Section 17 amends section 46b-16a to remove the requirement that an affidavit made under oath stating the conditions from which relief is sought accompany an application for an order of civil protection, and instead requires that a statement of the conditions from which relief is sought be made under penalty of false statement pursuant to section 53a-157b accompany an application;
3. Section 28 amends section 46b-127 to allow victims access to the private proceedings of juveniles being tried on the adult criminal docket;
4. Section 49 amends section 54-209 to add additional clinicians to whom a victim can disclose and incorporates the language that was in subsection (e) to allow victims of family violence crimes to have more opportunities for whom they can make disclosure;
5. Section 50 amends section 54-228 to allow for a victim to designate an immediate family member or other person, in addition to or in lieu of the victim, to receive certain notifications from the Office of Victim Services and the Department of Correction.

Leeland Moore from the Board of Pardons and Parole shared that the agency has one bill regarding the expansion of notices to include “suitability” notice versus eligibility. The board holds its position regarding clean slate language, it opposes the erasure of felonies and in the daily work of BOPP maintains that risk plays a major factor in all decisions – based on some proposals they recognize that one size does not fit all.

Ebony Sugs from DOC shared that Director Karen Martucci mentioned they are working on the criteria for compassionate parole and medical parole, and that specifically it means an individual would qualify only if they are physically incapable to cause harm.

**Other business**

Jessica (SOH) wanted to reiterate as mentioned in previous meetings that the reopening of courts and backlogs is pushing arraignment dates and continuances three plus months out. Prosecutors have been great offering zoom meetings with families, however some families have challenges with technology and support services. These are serious cases and families are frustrated. Jessica also shared that SOH has been featured on HBO, if anyone has the service and would like to watch.

Melissa Conway asked if any members had feedback regarding the court DV dockets. It appears to be an area that overlaps among the different service agencies. If anyone would like to share feedback regarding the systems in place, please do reach out.