

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

## ***Victim Issues Subcommittee***

### **Minutes for September 21, 2022**

Attendees: Liza Andrews (CCADV), Marc Pelka, Valina Carpenter, and Kevin Neary (OPM), Ebony Suggs DOC Victims Unit, Jessica Pizzano and Julia Henrickson (intern with SOH), Linda Cimino and Mary Kozicki (OVS), Joe Garibaldi, Deputy Director BOPP, Lucy Nolan and [Maura Crossin](#)(CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence)

**Minutes from May 18, 2022:** The motion to accept the minutes was moved by Linda Cimino and seconded by Marc Pelka, the motion carried.

#### **Statewide Victimization Survey Update**

Linda Cimino and Mary Kozicki from OVS gave an update. Linda began by thanking Kevin Neary for his fabulous work and expertise in working through the data.

A sum total of 1800 + unique crimes were reported in the survey showing there is a need to understand the experience of the victims and the crimes. Crime rates in Connecticut will be represented since the survey mirrored Connecticut's population. Two reports, one analyzing by crime and the other by the victim will be presented, allowing an understanding of crimes to specific populations and how they correlate to specific services.

The next steps include OVS implementing initiatives for outreach and awareness of services with stakeholders, regional meetings to increase the efficacy of services, and bimonthly meetings to address identified trends. It is expected the Connecticut survey will be used to compare the Bureau of Justice's annual Uniformed Crime Research (linked below) national survey in order to better serve victims and survivors.

#### **Research and Data Update:**

Marc reported that the [Criminal Victimization, 2021 | Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) was recently published.

OPM requested the Judicial Branch that the annual reports on restraining orders (RO), and civil protection orders (CPO) be reported monthly which the branch is reviewing. As the CJPAC monthly indicators report tracks changes in corrections populations, it would be helpful if the report is broadened to provide a comprehensive view by capturing indicators and flows of the whole criminal justice system.

The CJPAC Annual Trends presentation has a variety of whole crimes that are not reported. Reasons for not reporting include fear of reprisal from the offender; police could not help, victims feeling the crime was trivial, and lack of knowledge of victim services. It is a struggle to show why victim services are not used to their full potential (i.e. how to show why only 9% of victims go to services and those who don't go to the police). It is critical that the information is used correctly.

#### **Data Workgroup:**

Kevin Neary reported on an effort to build a monitoring platform for victim services (annual trends). He is looking to this group for a framework that represents how people flow through the system and shows its complex system with many different outcomes, which can be monitored.

Kevin would like to develop a working group and aim to make the monitoring goal useful for the subcommittee. The group will meet monthly beginning in 2023. Anyone interested in joining the workgroup can reach out to the chairs (Liza Andrews or Lucy Nolan) of this subcommittee. Any other groups or individuals who would be helpful should be relayed to them as well.

#### **Byrne Jag Grants**

Valina Carpenter reported on the Byrne JAG Grant, information on it which can be accessed at the OPM website and at this link: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-Adult/Program-Jag/Justice-Assistance-Grant-JAG>

The federally funded JAG program assists states and local governments with the prevention and control of crime and the improvement of the criminal justice system. The grants are administered by OPM and are meant to be flexible to spur innovation (for pilot programs for the agency to carry forward). Connecticut has a large amount of funding as held back 2017-2020 funds were held back and the 2017/2018 funds are going to be expended for 2022/23. **Public announcement on the grant opportunities will be announced in the next couple of weeks** once the application process is standardized. Information can be found in the website linked above.

#### **Trends from the summer**

Jessica Pizzano from Survivors of Homicide reported they serviced 619 secondary survivors last year (doubled from the year before) and the need for advocates and court notification has increased significantly.

Maura Crossin (The Alliance) reported that Court is open but totally understaffed, and victims' rights violations are "through the roof" including plea deals made without notifying the victims of the crime.

Lives are really disrupted. Advocates are feeling overwhelmed and burnout, including Survivors of Homicide who may have to start waitlisting people for the first time. At our November meeting, the Office of Victim Advocate will be asked to report on the number of victims seeing

court cases and how the violations of victims' rights are handled. The new processes around post-conviction are creating difficulty in ensuring victims are included and notified.

Issues include about 40% of commutations being homicide or murder cases, although not all are getting a full hearing many are. Child victims are not willing to testify as too much time has passed and cases are getting nolled because of the lack of testimony, There is a high rate of death of victims and offenders which allows charges to be dismissed which in turn creates increased victimization of the victim. Legislators don't know that violent crimes are included and public education is needed to allow victims to know that post-conviction relief is available.

We will add this to the agenda for next month and will ask the Board of Pardons and Parole to report on ways to support them with the commutations hearings and to speak with the victims. The BoPP had approximately 500 requests for commutations hearings in the last couple of months and had to hire new staff to go forward with them.

The next meeting is November 16, 2022, from 10-12.