

Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Committee
Victim Issues Subcommittee

February 16, 2022 Minutes

Present: Kevin Neary, Valina Carpenter (OPM), Linda Cimino (OVS), Richard Sparaco (BOPP), Jessica Pizzano (Survivors of Homicide), Michelle Lettieri (MADD), Liza Andrews, Geralyn O'Neil-Wild (CCADV), Lucy Nolan, Ashlei Biggs (CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence), Ebonie Suggs (DOC)

Lucy called the meeting to order at 10:04am

Welcome and Introductions

- Lucy welcomed everyone and guests introduced themselves

October Meeting Minutes

- Acceptance of minutes moved by Linda Cimino, seconded by Geralyn O'Neil-Wild; unanimously accepted

Statewide Victimization Survey Update – provided by Linda Cimino, OVS

- Completed 2 of 3 phases
- 1,237 individuals completed survey; participants were randomly selected;
 - 53% reported being a direct or indirect victim of violent crime; of those - 25% reported domestic violence; 24% reported physical assault; 17% reported sexual assault
 - 39% reported being a direct or indirect victim of non-violent crime (e.g., personal property, financial, etc.)
 - 8% reported being a victim of other types of crime, including DUI
- 33% of violent crime victims reported that the incident resulted in repeat victimization
- 1/4 reported not telling anyone about victimization
- 3/4 reported that they did not receive one or more needed services; most common needed service not received was for mental health issues stemming from the victimization
- Held in-depth interviews with 39 respondents
- Key finding of interviews –
 - Individuals reported polarized reactions with law enforcement (strong positive reaction or strong negative reaction); those who experienced violent crimes were more likely to report dissatisfaction with law enforcement response;
 - Almost all participants struggled with going back to work or school because of mental health challenges related to their victimization; wanted resources to help them transition back to work; want services to be better advertised
- Going to hold focus groups with service providers in March; will include law enforcement, prosecutors, MDTs, etc.
 - Gerrie suggested including members of the faith-based community
 - Linda mentioned possibly using feedback from individual interviews to shape questions for service providers
- Expect final needs assessment to be submitted in April; there will be presentation to stakeholders

- Valina asked about any trends related to places where victims go for services that are not the traditional victim-service providers; Linda suggested that there may be some information on this once OVS has the raw data from the consultant

Research & Data Update – provided by Kevin Neary, OPM

- Kevin reported that OPM is working with the Judicial Branch about the possibility of getting some metrics related to restraining orders
- OPM is hoping to have more conversations in the coming months with service providers about available data

2022 Legislative Session

- Member priorities
 - Lucy discussed Alliance priority to define "consent" in state statute
- Other issues members have heard about
 - Movement by other groups to change the sex offender registry – people on for 10 years would be able to go to court to request that they be removed after 5 years; concerns regarding victim notification about any such request
 - Proposal by the group, Violence Crime Survivors, to add domestic violence homicide to state's existing "murder with special circumstances" charge
 - Proposed HB 5005 regarding the state's victim compensation program – proposes that the state's victim compensation program be used to reimburse victims of motor vehicle theft, property theft or property damage for their losses; could be costly and is outside of federal regulations for how victim compensation can be used
 - Complications with how Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) and victim compensation intersect – PFML statute says that individuals seeking payment from PFML cannot seek compensation from any other state agency at the same time, including OVS; employers can mandate a victim use PFML first which would tie the hand of the victim to then seek compensation from OVS
 - Efforts in other states to limit use of GoFundMe to fund burial, funeral expenses, etc. because many state victim compensation statutes would then prohibit use of victim compensation to cover those costs if the family has received resources from a GoFundMe campaign
- VOCA Funding Gap
 - Governor Lamont's proposal includes \$14 million in FY23 to cover anticipated 50% cut to federal VOCA funds
 - Discussion about this being a two year federal funding gap and the need for the final budget to include two years (FY23 and FY24) of one-time funding

Member Updates and Announcements

- Rich discussed recent processes around commutations; working with DOC to make sure individuals can get placed in halfway houses and reintegrate back into society gradually because some have been incarcerated for decades (conviction was for an incident committed when they

were under 18); Ashlei asked about victim input – Rich said victims can testify before the Board at the commutation hearing; victim then needs to direct any further advocacy to DOC as the individual may stay under DOC supervision at a halfway house

The meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

March 16, 2022

April 20, 2022

May 18, 2022

September 21, 2022

November 16, 2022