

Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Tuckahoe Library
1901 Starling Drive, Henrico, VA 23229

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Final Minutes

Committee Members Present: Maria Altonen, Kathy Anderson, Teresa Berry, Elvira De la Cruz, Sanu Dieng, Marva Dunn, Senator Barbara Favola, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Nancy Fowler, Kate Hanger, Colin Draper for Kristen Howard, Delegate Mark Levine, Claudia Lopez-Muñiz, Melissa McMenemy, Unique Phillips, Jonathan Yglasias for Kristi VanAudenhove

Not Present: Nichele Carver, Autumn Edmond, Toni Zollicoffer

Welcome, Introductions, and Remarks

Chairperson, Teresa Berry, called the meeting to order at 10:36 a.m. Welcome and introductions were made, including five new committee members:

- Elvira De la Cruz, Chief Executive Officer and Senior Advocate, Latinos In Virginia Empowerment Center
- Sanu Dieng, Executive Director, Transitions Family Violence Services
- Marva Dunn, Family Violence and Sexual Assault Unit, City of Emporia
- Claudia Lopez-Muñiz, Executive Director, New Directions Center
- Unique Phillips, Sex Trafficking Case Manager, Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley

Chair Berry determined that a quorum was present.

Approval of September 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Delegate Levine made a motion to approve the September minutes. Sanu Dieng seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Partner Abuse Intervention and Prevention Workgroup

Committee member Toni Zollicoffer was scheduled to provide an update; however, due to Toni's absence the topic was tabled until the next meeting.

Introducing New DCJS Staff

Tom Fitzpatrick introduced three new DCJS staff members, Gleibys Gonzalez, Amber Stanwix, and Andrea Sumter. Tom provided descriptions of their positions. Gleibys Gonzalez is the statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Services Coordinator. Amber Stanwix is the Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Coordinator. Andrea Sumter is the Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Site Visit Consultant.

Past Business

- Adopting an Electronic Meeting Policy
 - Chair Berry reminded members that this topic was tabled during the last meeting, due to questions about how the budget language impacts regular FOIA requirements. She solicited feedback on the revised draft policy developed during the last meeting, which was emailed to members prior to the meeting by Kristina Vadas. Tom Fitzpatrick made a motion to adopt the policy. The motion was seconded by Delegate Mark Levine. The motion was approved, unanimously.
 - In light of the adoption of the policy, committee members may contact DCJS support staff if they must miss a meeting in accordance with the policy. Staff are Kristina Vadas (Kristina.vadas@dcjs.virginia.gov) and Andi Martin (Andi.martin@dcjs.virginia.gov).
 - Members may miss one of four meetings, annually, due to personal matters. They may miss more but the reason must be stated on the record.

- Letter to the Virginia Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission, drafted by Delegate Mark Levine
 - A drafted letter to the Virginia Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission concerning Judge James Fisher was provided to members prior to the meeting. The attorney for Ms. Orndoff (victim of domestic violence whom the letter concerns) was present (via telephone) as a guest and addressed questions by the committee. The committee discussed verbiage in the letter.
 - Some members raised concerns about the letter being signed on behalf of the committee, because this effort seems outside of the scope of the committee's work. A suggestion was made that members could sign the letter as individuals, rather than the letter being from the whole committee.
 - An additional suggestion was made that someone contact the Loudoun County domestic violence services agency (LAWS) to inquire whether they would like this letter sent by members of the committee, as they declined to participate in a statement about the Judge's behavior from the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.
 - No motion was made to approve this letter; rather, members who wish to sign the letter will meet with Delegate Levine after the meeting to finalize verbiage.

State Agency Funding Updates

- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
 - Andi Martin reported that the Criminal Justice Services Board met on December 9, 2021. They approved calendar year 2022 (CY22) Sexual Assault Services Program grant awards (24 awards totaling \$525,306), and they awarded a brand new grant to Rappahannock County to start a Victim Witness Program.
 - VSTOP award packages for CY22 will be emailed to recipients soon.
 - Concerning the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant:
 - The budget bill provided \$12,199,930 to DCJS to support services to victims of crime including, but not limited to, services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, victims of elder abuse and child abuse, and victims of crime. The funding is also intended to be used to support sexual assault and domestic violence applicants of the Victims Services Grant Program (VSGP) for Fiscal Year 2022, in order to restore funds that were reduced from the competitive grant applications for this grant period, due to lack of funding.
 - Approximately \$9 million of this funding was designated for eligible VSGP recipients with the majority supporting sexual and domestic violence services. These award packages have been sent out, budgets are approved, and agencies have started requesting their funds.

- DCJS also received \$1 million in ARPA funds to support the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Victim Fund. This money will start being awarded in January.
- Virginia Department of Health
 - Maria Altonen reported that for the VDH Sexual Assault Prevention Fund, six programs will receive awards. These contracts have been sent out. VDH is in the final stages of completing contracts for a state college campus initiative. These awards will result in regional technical assistance hubs, which will spread primary prevention work. VDH is also developing a toolkit that will be used for the peer educator work with the colleges.
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
 - No report
- Virginia Department of Social Services
 - Nancy Fowler reported that VDSS received additional ARPA funds, which provides sexual assault funding through the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). They are working on a plan to distribute these funds, of which there is approximately \$3.8 million. VDSS also has received ARPA funds for vaccine testing and access to mobile health benefiting survivors of domestic violence (\$8.3 million), which will be distributed over the next two to three years.

New Business

- The five new committee members introduced themselves again, including information about their work in the field of sexual and domestic violence. It was requested that each new member provide a resume to be included with the meeting minutes.

Other Member Announcements

- Due to the additional ARPA and Cares Act funds, a question was posed as to whether funding agencies anticipate awarding grants to new projects. DCJS responded that the ARPA money received has been used to offset lower VOCA funds rather than support new initiatives.
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) legislation will be introduced in the U.S. Senate later this month. This will include increases to funding for VAWA programs. Many agencies in Virginia rely on VAWA funding to support basic infrastructure. The Action Alliance will send out an action alert.

Public Comment

- None

2022 Meeting Dates & Closing

- DCJS will send a poll to members in order to establish 2022 meeting dates
- Chair Berry adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m.