

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 27, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 11:37 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

Pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 2.2-3708.3

Members Present:

Judy Castelee, Executive Director, Project Horizon
Cori Davis, Program Director, Bedford Domestic Violence Services
Nancy Fowler, Director, Office of Family Violence¹
Avery Harper, Executive Director, The Phoenix Project
Tamy Mann, Director, Giles County Victim/Witness Assistance Program²
Kelly McCoy Meade, Executive Director, Women’s Resource Center of the New River Valley
Faith Power, Executive Director, The Laurel Center
Heather Sellers, Director, Bedford County Victim/Witness Assistance Program
Kristina Vadas, Manager of Victims Services, DCJS
Laura Beth Weaver, Director of Advocacy and Member Support, Virginia Sexual and Domestic
Violence Action Alliance³

Members Absent:

Timika Cousins, Executive Director, The Faces Behind a Purpose for You
Leonard Hall, Jr, Director, Millstone International Logistics
Brittany Stevens, Executive Director, Safehome Systems, Inc.

Professional Standards Team Members Present:

Amber Stanwix, Professional Standards Operations Coordinator, DCJS

DCJS Staff Present:

Andi Martin, Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Initiatives Supervisor, DCJS

¹ Nancy Fowler logged on to the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

² Tamy Mann and Kristina Vadas logged on to the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

³ Laura Beth Weaver logged on to the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Welcome & Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the March 12, 2026, Committee meeting were reviewed by the members. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Judy Castele, and Kelly McCoy Meade seconded the motion. After a vote, the minutes were approved 6-0.

Election of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

The Committee next addressed the elections of the new Committee Chair and Vice-Chair. After a brief review of the requirements, Judy Castele nominated Faith Power to be the Chairperson and Kelly McCoy Meade to be the Vice-Chairperson. Cori Davis seconded the nominations, and the Committee voted 7-0 in favor.

Review of Potential Seal Design

Amber Stanwix presented a potential design for a seal that accredited agencies could display on their websites to indicate their accredited status. In general, the group was very favorable. One member questioned whether the seal meets any standards set by DCJS. Kristina Vadas explained that, because accreditation is given by the Professional Standards Committee and not DCJS, the seal does not need to meet criteria set by the agency.

This sparked a discussion regarding the Committee's position within the government of the Commonwealth. Ms. Vadas explained that, while DCJS does provide staffing, the Committee is its own separate entity. The group then expressed concerns regarding whether the seal would need to meet any requirements set by the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office. Ms. Stanwix affirmed that staff from DCJS will inquire with that office regarding any seal requirements. She will then report back to the Committee, and the Committee can resume consideration of the seal design.

Discussion Regarding Survey Data⁴

Amber Stanwix conducted a review of the survey data that was gathered from sexual and domestic violence agencies throughout the Commonwealth. As she did so, the group identified several areas for further discussion. These included:

- the requirement for a policy affirming that staff, board of directors, and volunteers should reflect the diversity of the community served,

⁴ The survey data is attached at the end of this document.

- the requirement for a sustainability plan with projected revenues and expenditures for the 36 months of operation,
- the requirement for protection of home computers,
- the accreditation period of three years, and
- the removal of the standard relating to prevention.

The group also agreed to look at the documents required by the Professional Standards to identify items that could be added, removed, or changed. Ms. Stanwix suggested that the group should do the same for the requirements of the Training Matrix. The group agreed to review both during the next meeting.

Finally, Ms. Stanwix reviewed comments made about the accreditation process. Several of these comments concerned duplication with the grants process, as well as the requirements to have paper copies of all required documents. Ms. Stanwix related to the group that it may be possible to allow agencies to add documents to the Online Grant Management System (OGMS) used by DCJS. The Committee members agreed that this could be a good way to cut down on duplication. Ms. Stanwix stated that she would move forward with requesting this change to OGMS and would report back to the group.

Professional Standards Update

Amber Stanwix reported that she recorded an information session regarding any survey comments that are already included in the Professional Standards or that have been previously addressed by the Professional Standards Team. This information session was sent to the field on May 20th, 2026.

In addition, Ms. Stanwix reported that applications for the new Sexual and Domestic Violence Standards and Response Coordinator position closed on May 6th. She stated that interviews for the position are expected to start in the week of June 1st.

Discussion Regarding Revision Process

The group then discussed how to move forward in the Professional Standards revision process. One member stated that recommendations could be made by DCJS staff and then the group could consider those recommendations. The group agreed to pursue this course of action.

Other

There were no other updates from the group.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Closing Remarks

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting will be held on June 30th, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Midlothian Library.

Accreditation is most meaningful when it strengthens day-to-day work, not when it adds parallel systems that exist solely for compliance.

Overall Themes

Theme	Reaccreditation	Accreditation	Total
Concerns Regarding Training	9	4	13
Time Burden of the Process	2	6	8
Requirements for 24/7 Services	6	1	7
Volume of Required Documents	4	1	5

Overall Suggestions and Comments

Add

- Standard relating to staff/leadership wellness (2 surveys mentioned this)
 - The work can't get done if employees are burnt out, so minimum requirements for lower-cost staff benefits (e.g., PTO) might be nice to see
- Standard relating to client satisfaction
- Query agency partners on performance
- Integration of survivor feedback and lived experience into program improvement
- Standard #6 – Add/enhance data safety standards
 - More specificity on what data needs to be retained
- Standard #8 - Guidance or examples on how cultural humility should be measured and documented in sexual and/or domestic violence service delivery would make it more practical to implement and assess

Remove

- Standard #1 – remove requirement for a policy affirming that staff, board of directors, and volunteers should reflect the diversity of the community served → concern this could violate anti-discrimination laws
- Standard #3 – remove requirement for a sustainability plan with projected revenues and expenditures for the 36 months of operation -> because grants are issued on a yearly basis, this is not feasible (2 surveys mentioned this)
- Standard #15 – remove requirement to identify the diverse needs of the community through at least two methods -> this should be done through community engagement

Question

- Standard #7 - How can organizations require the protection of home computers without offering resources such as anti-virus software?

Other

- Remove the fee
- Provide funds for any necessary upgrades
- Accreditation should be every 5 years

- Prevention Standard – 3 surveys recommended adding a prevention standard, while 2 surveys approved of its removal
 - There could be a specific standard focused on youth that encourages agencies to develop and maintain relationships with schools and youth-serving organizations to promote awareness of sexual violence, domestic violence, and stalking.
 - A similar emphasis could be added for older adults, encouraging partnerships with organizations that serve aging populations to ensure outreach, education, and tailored services for this group.

- Consider prioritizing standards -> the must haves vs things that can be worked on over time
- Shift from a policy-heavy compliance model to a more practice-focused and outcomes-driven framework
- There should be a range of "good enough through absolute best" practices.

- More clarity regarding what is considered a policy that must be approved at the board level and what procedures can be approved internally.
- Reduce requirements for narrowly tailored, hypothetical policies
- Remove policies that address a rare or unlikely scenario or are already covered through other requirements, such as state grant contracts
- Several standards require stand-alone policies or procedures that are:
 - Highly prescriptive,
 - Unlikely to be used in day-to-day operations, and
 - Already addressed through other required policies or oversight mechanisms

Suggestions and Comments Specific to Training

Concerns

- Being able to keep up with in-person requirements
- Revolving staff (2 surveys mentioned this)
- Volunteer training requirements (2 surveys mentioned this)
- Too detailed/extensive
- Remove items that are specific to certain staff members
- Certain topics should be prioritized to be done immediately
 - What is mission critical for the first week of work, etc.?
- Give organizations the ability/flexibility to tailor training to specific roles
- More staff-specific training that is required within 30 days that can be accessed online
- Guidance on how to document training

Suggestions to Add

- Process for ROIs and subpoenas
- Traumatic Brain Injuries
- Impact of Trauma on the Brain
- Reflective Supervision
- Digital/Data Safety for PII
- How to talk to constituents about confidentiality
 - a basic description reviewed by an attorney would be beneficial
- Add training that integrates housing stability, financial empowerment, and systems navigation, reflecting the increasingly complex needs of survivors.

Suggestions to Remove

- Theories/Models of Service Provision
 - Individual and Systems Advocacy, Survivor-directed services, Adverse Childhood Experiences, CDC model, Trauma-informed, based on SAMSHA model
- Public Assistance Benefits (2 surveys mentioned this)
- Fair Housing in DV
- Addition/Recovery
- Remove Items that are Specific to Certain Staff Roles
 - For example, STIs, ACEs, Engagement

Suggestions and Comments Regarding the Accreditation Process

- Duplicative of grants (2 surveys mentioned this)
- Dropbox for documents (2 surveys mentioned this)
- Change the requirement for having everything printed off and in a binder for the site visit

- More details in materials sent to organizations (guidelines, etc.)
- Better communication

- Unknown time commitment at beginning of process
- Fixed dates for submission of materials
- Allow programs to schedule a program management process timeline

- Provision of resources for training requirements such as cultural humility, intersection of oppressions for board members

Already in Professional Standards or Previously Addressed by Professional Standards Team

- Desire for templates (3 surveys mentioned this)
- Clarifying that collaboration may be used to meet the Standards
- Whether policies must be applicable to an entire organization or just to the SDV program
- Training exceptions for those who have prior experience or training
- Desire for clearer guidance on what documentation is needed to demonstrate compliance with training requirements
- Having additional requirements nonprofits need to make compared to government agencies (2 surveys mentioned this)
- Fingerprints for background checks (2 surveys mentioned this)
- The need for MOUs to be signed within one year of the accreditation application
- The amount of training per topic is not prescribed by the Standards
- Suggested training topics
 - Boundaries
 - Human trafficking
 - Mandatory trauma informed training
 - Stalking