

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 11:02 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

Pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 2.2-3708.3

Members Present:

Judy Castelee, Executive Director, Project Horizon
Timika Cousins, Executive Director, The Faces Behind a Purpose for You¹
Cori Davis, Program Director, Bedford Domestic Violence Services
Elvira De la Cruz, Chief Executive Officer, Latinos in Virginia Empowerment Center²
Avery Harper, Executive Director, The Phoenix Project
Tamy Mann, Director, Giles County Victim/Witness Assistance Program³
Kelly McCoy, 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 Program⁴
Brittany Stevens, Executive Director, Safehome Systems, Inc.
Kristina Vadas, Manager of Victims Services, DCJS
Laura Beth Weaver, Director of Advocacy and Member Support, Virginia Sexual and Domestic
Violence Action Alliance

Members Absent:

Leonard Hall, Jr, Director, Millstone International Logistics
Leah Kipley, Assistant Director, National Safe Haven Alliance
Markella Maschas, FVPSA Contract Administrator, Office of Family Violence, DSS

Professional Standards Team Members Present:

Amber Stanwix, Professional Standards Operations Coordinator, DCJS

¹ Timika Cousins signed in to the meeting at 10:32 a.m. She was off camera from 10:34 a.m. to 10:35 a.m. and 10:41 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

² Elvira De la Cruz signed in to the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

³ Tamy Mann signed in to the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

⁴ Heather Sellers was off camera from 10:26 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

DCJS Staff Present:

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

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 December 4, 2025, Committee meeting were reviewed by the members. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Judy Castele, and Heather Sellers seconded the motion. After a vote, the minutes were approved 7-0.

Report on FOIA Rules

At the December 4th meeting, members had inquired whether subcommittees would be able to meet virtually. Amber Stanwix reported that subcommittees are “public bodies” under the Virginia Freedom Information Act. Therefore, they may meet virtually, but no more than two times per year or 50% of the number of meetings rounded up the next whole number. In addition, they cannot have consecutive virtual meetings.

Report on Survey Data

Amber Stanwix provided information regarding surveys that were sent out by the Professional Standards Team in 2023 and 2025. In the surveys, agencies reported various concerns regarding the Professional Standards and the accreditation process. In addition, agencies offered several suggestions to make accreditation more desirable, such as financial incentives or a seal to place on websites and written materials.

As some of the agencies had raised the issue of staffing, Ms. Stanwix presented information on the number of full-time employees for each of the accredited agencies. She reported a wide range of numbers, including four agencies that have five or fewer employees.

Feedback from Non-Reaccrediting Agencies

Some members of the Committee had requested feedback from the two agencies that did not move forward with reaccreditation. Ms. Stanwix reported that both agencies had undergone recent leadership changes and did not feel able to move forward with the reaccreditation process. However, both have reported that they will pursue accreditation in the future.

Wellness Standards

Amber Stanwix briefly discussed standards relating to staff wellness that she located in other jurisdictions. She also presented a draft standard from the proposed Virginia Standards of Care for Human Trafficking Organizations.

Discussion Regarding Draft of Survey

The group then discussed the drafts of a survey that will be sent out to agencies requesting feedback on the Professional Standards. The group agreed on the wording, decided that the surveys would be sent to executive directors, and agreed on a four-week response period. The Committee agreed to then reconvene on March 12th to discuss the responses and how the revision process will proceed.

This topic sparked a discussion regarding some of the requirements of the Professional Standards. The members raised issues regarding inclusive signage and client surveys. The group agreed to keep these topics in mind as the revision process moves forward.

The group also briefly discussed whether the membership would change due to the new Governor. Amber Stanwix reported that the Committee membership is full at this time, but some members may be leaving. In addition, the terms of five members will expire in June of 2026. The group agreed to think about other agency leaders who might be a good addition to the Committee if spots were to open.

Other

A member raised the issue of seals that could be displayed by accredited agencies. She inquired if this was something the group thought could add to the value of accreditation. Some members agreed that it could provide value, while others were concerned that, if the bar is set too high for agencies to achieve accreditation, some agencies would not be able to access the benefits of accreditation. The group agreed to add this topic to the agenda for the next meeting.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Closing Remarks

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting will be held on March 12, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Tuckahoe branch of the Henrico Public Library.