

South Carolina Victim Services Coordinating Council
Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2009
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Edgar Brown Building, Room 415, 1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia South Carolina

Present: Larry Barker Ph.D., Nancy Barton, William Bilton, Mark Fallaw, Barbara Grissom, Shelton Hughes, Jeffrey Moore, BJ Nelson, Veronica Swain – Kunz, Susan Walkup, Hope Blackley, Surleaner Lakin - Smith

Absent Dean Kilpatrick, Ph.D., Tom Lucas, Carol Woodard, Nataki Brown, Sandi Wofford, Leigh Caldwell, Lorena Gonzalez, Ph.D., Marvin Bryant Sr., and Vicki Bourus.

The meeting was called to order and the facilitator read a statement regarding VSCC operation in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.

Jeff Moore motioned to approve the Council's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act; this was seconded by Mark Fallaw and approved by the Council

Veronica Swain – Kunz, introduced Patricia Ravenhorst, Esq. with the SCVAN Immigrant Victim Network Program to the Council. Patricia presented the dynamics of the Immigrant Victim Network Program. The program is in partnership with SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, the Coalition for New South Carolinians, SC Legal Services, Catholic Charities Immigration Services and the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Ms. Ravenhorst will train criminal justice professionals about the legal rights of immigrant crime victims, and provide those victims with direct legal representation and culturally competent social service referrals.

Dr. Lorena Gonzales in her absence provided fact sheets to the Council from the Richland County SART team regarding their new process of handling the sexual assault protocol examinations as it relates to HB 3677. This process is still being evaluated.

Ms. Rebecca Williams a representative of SCCADVASA presented information on the Violence Against Women's Act and information on the handling of sexual assault protocol examinations at the State level. It was reiterated that South Carolina is now in full compliance with the Violence Against Women's Act. SCCADVASA will be providing training across the State on the new recommended protocol for the sexual assault protocol examinations.

The Council received a committee report from the credentialing committee. It was asked that if any of the Council members know of any organization conducting training to make sure that they get it approved for the crediting hours prior to sending it out. It was also discussed the concerns of the VSP's not having their number at the time of the sign in. This sign in sheets during trainings are suggested to be filled out at the end of the session but it is at the discretion of the organization providing the training.

Ms. Blackley also noted that she received a call from a victim and a Representative Cobb- Hunter regarding situations where the perpetrator is considered mentally ill. The concern of the victim was wanting to know if the perpetrator had been released from the mental health institution where they were being held. It was asked to Ms. Blackley to ask the Council to look into the current notification process and look into revisions being made with the notification process.

The surveys were sent out to the organizations using survey monkey. Out of the one survey that was sent to Mental Health that one was returned. The Department of Corrections was sent six surveys and they have returned with three started and two completed. The Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon were sent twenty – five surveys and twelve of those were completed. The Circuit Courts were sent forty – five surveys and two of those were completed. The Summary Courts were sent eight hundred twenty surveys and eighty – one were completed. The Prosecutors were sent one hundred ten surveys and sixty – five were returned, The Detention Centers were sent eighty surveys and eleven were returned. Law Enforcement was sent two hundred fifty surveys and sixty – two were returned.

Nancy Barton suggested placing sanctions and consequences to Hope for next year. Hope agreed that is something that the Council should take a more in depth look. It was recommended by Jeff Moore to expand the Proviso 89.70 to include the training that is needed within the entities. This would allow more enforcement for the compliance with the certification. Jeff expressed the need for education on Act 141 monies and the proper ways to spend these funds.

Dr. Barker provided examples of the letters and the surveys as it relates to Proviso 72.25 that was sent out to the counties and the municipalities. Jeff Moore expressed the concern regarding the entities that were forwarding the surveys to the wrong people to properly fill out the forms.

The Council was provided with the suggestions from the sub – committee regarding the suggested expenditures for the Act 141 monies. These suggestions were reviewed from the suggested guideline currently being provided by SOVA. Jeff informed the Council that one of the most noticeable changes was the removal of the Priority 1 and Priority 2 headings. The sub – committee did not feel it was their job to tell an entity what was a priority for their agency. Barbara Grissom suggested adding funding for automated victim information and notification systems. Jeff referenced item four that would be inclusive to that suggestion. There were no objections to adding that line with out a specific reference to a particular program. Jeff reiterated that these again are just

suggestions being made by the Council for entities to use. Veronica Swain – Kunz suggested reimbursement for towing to the victims regarding stolen vehicles. Chief Fallaw suggested there might be a lot of opposition from Law Enforcement.

It was suggest for the Council to look at the legislation that formed the Victim Services Coordinating Council to add under their responsibilities the ability to provide guidelines for the use of the Act 141 monies. The question to have the legislation amended was asked to be placed on the next meetings agenda.

The next VSCC meeting was scheduled for November 10,2009 at 10:00 am,

The meeting was motioned for adjournment by BJ Nelson and seconded by Jeff Moore.