

Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Virtual Meeting

(In accordance with approved policy)

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present

Elvira De la Cruz, Sabrina Dorman-Andrew, Senator Barbara Favola, Nancy Fowler (VDSS), Pyowook Han, Kate Hanger (VVAN), Colin Drabert (Crime Commission), Krista Martinez, Marybeth Matthews-Adkins, Karli Meagher, Claudia Lopez-Muniz (arrived at 10:49 am), Kike Oliver (DHCD), McKenna Burcham for Adrian Perry (OAG), Kristina Hagen for Delegate Irene Shin, Kristina Vadas (DCJS), and Michelle Ellis Young.

Committee Members Absent

Maria Altonen (VDH), Marva Dunn, and Kristi VanAudenhove (VSDVAA).

Guests Present

Eileen Longenecker and Rachel DeGraba (Office of the Executive Secretary); Amber Stanwix, Anya Shaffer, Gleibys Gonzales, Patricia Foster, Mikayla Martinez, and Andi Martin (DCJS); Ji Yeon Kim (Korean Community Services Center of Greater Washington); and Teresa Berry (Sexual Assault Response and Awareness).

Welcome and Introductions

Marybeth Matthews-Adkins, Committee Vice-Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:35 am. A quorum was present. Marybeth welcomed new committee member, Sabrina Dorman-Andrew. Committee members introduced themselves.

Approval of March 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Senator Favola made a motion to approve the March 5, 2025, meeting minutes. Kate Hanger seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the minutes, unanimously.

State Agency Funding Updates

- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Kristina Vadas reported the following:
 - Virginia's federal fiscal year (FFY) 2024 VOCA award totals \$19,866,137, down from \$34,605,387 in FFY 2023. DCJS anticipates a similar award in FFY 2025. The FFY VOCA application has not yet been announced.

- The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) recently released some new grant opportunities, called Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO), including NOFOs for DCJS's Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) Formula Funding; Standards, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors (VSTOP) Funding; and Improving Criminal Justice Response (ICJR) funding. DCJS is working on these applications, which are due to OVW later this month (June 2025).

Claudia Lopez-Muniz arrived at 10:49.

- The following DCJS grants are in their final quarter of their respective grant cycles: Victims Services Grant Program for Competitive Grants; Victims Services Grant Program for Sexual and Domestic Violence Services (non-competitive); Victim/Witness Grant Program; Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Victim Fund; and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding. Aside from ARPA, which completely ends 6/30/2025, these grant programs will start a new grant cycle on 7/1/2025 with new awards.
 - DCJS has two calendar year grant programs: VSTOP and SASP. VSTOP is in the second year of a two-year grant cycle. SASP is half-way through its 12-month grant cycle.
 - In response to a question concerning how DCJS will plan for reduced VOCA funding, Kristina explained that state general funds have been helpful in keeping awards level. This year, state general funds increased, which provided for increased awards. Future VOCA-supported grant awards may be decreased if state general funds are not available the future.
- Virginia Department of Health. No report.
 - Virginia Department of Housing (VDH) and Community Development. Kike Oliver reported the following.
 - VDH's Homelessness and Special Needs Housing Unit Grant Program is in the process of closing out grants. State fiscal year 2026 awards will start 7/1/2025.
 - The Committee discussed how housing vouchers may be impacted by the pending federal budget bill. Kike referred members to William Kerner with VDH. Some members offered that the Virginia Housing Trust Fund has been very helpful yet there is some uncertainty with housing funds including Homeless and Special Needs funding, which support emergency shelters, rapid rehousing, and homelessness prevention.
 - Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). Nancy Fowler reported the following:
 - VDSS's Domestic Violence Underserved Population Grant was to be posted and effective 7/1/2025 but it was postponed and should be posted later this month (June 2025), with awards to be active 11/1/2025. Current contracts, which are scheduled to end 6/30/2025, will be extended through 10/31/2025.
 - VDSS Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Grant was renewed for one final year. There will be a new solicitation in the Spring of 2026.

- VDSS has two APRA grants: Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Grant and ARPA Vaccine Testing Grant. Both will end 6/30/2025.
- VDSS has some left-over ARPA funding, which they are planning to use to provide additional training to providers and purchase computer equipment for programs.
- VDSS is funding STEPS, which is a new Domestic Violence Service Provider in Virginia. STEPS is a community action agency that is serving part of the region previously served by the Southside Center for Violence Prevention (now closed) and the Powhatan Department of Social Services. STEPS will be comprehensive service provider. DCJS is funding sexual assault services, as well.

Past Business

- Language Access Work Group Update. Representatives from the Action Alliance were unable to attend the meeting. They asked Kristina Vadas to inquire from the Committee whether there is a continued need or interest in this work group continuing pursuit of language access improvements. The Committee discussed this question and were in agreement that issues remain, and they would like the work group to continue working on the problems.

Previously the Committee asked the Crime Commission to conduct a study on the extent and gaps in language access for victims across the Commonwealth. The Crime Commission has been unable to fulfil this request due to the required work assigned to them by the General Assembly each year. Committee members agreed that a survey would be helpful, and the suggestion was made to contact a higher education school such as George Mason University or to request a JLARC (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission) study.

Members discussed the need for a standardized process for providing interpreters in court across the Commonwealth and the hurdles faced by victim/witness staff in accessing interpreters.

Meeting guest Eileen Longenecker with the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) shared the following:

- OES has funding to support interpreters for court needs. OES can also provide interpreters at clerks' offices. They cannot support victim/witness or law enforcement interpretation needs. Victim/witness needs to seek additional funds for their own interpreters.
- OES has limited interpreters and many vacancies.
- Courts are aware of their language access responsibility.
- OES has information on their website regarding the language access plan for Virginia courts.
- OES has "Teletalk," which is an interpretation service for after hours. OES trains magistrates and courts about this service.
- Eileen invites Committee members to come talk to her about issues of OES.
- In response to an inquiry about who community members can contact about complaints or additional assistance needed, Eileen will report back.

- VA judicial system website: will show what is available in terms of language services: <https://www.vacourts.gov/courtadmin/aoc/djs/programs/interpreters/home>
- OES is working on updating translated protection order forms.

The suggestion was made for the workgroup to create a document/handout about language access resources, including the aforementioned OES webpage and information about individuals' language access rights. Additionally, it was suggested that there be training on the handout.

Members also noted that even when interpretation is available, it is often not trauma-informed, which can lead to miscommunication or re-traumatization. Some clients feel uncomfortable or unsafe speaking through a third party, especially when discussing sensitive or personal issues.

Nancy from VDSS suggested that she meet with the language access work group to develop a new entry on language access in VDSS's Promising Practices Guide for the SDV service providers. The guide can be found here:

https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/domestic_violence/ppg.cgi#community_connections

Michelle Young left the meeting at 11:40

- **Impact of Recent Federal Actions**

The Committee discussed the current impact of recent federal actions. Senator Favola asked for service provider organizations to contact her once the federal budget bill passes and help her identify the gaps and local impacts resulting from the budget bill. Caludia and Marybeth will make this request to agency directors at the Action Alliance Directors Call in late June 2025. They will then provide Senator Favola a summary of the gaps and impacts discussed, and they will also report this information back to the Committee sometime in July.

New Business

- No new business.
- In response to a member asking how to bring up new business in the future, Kristina Vadas clarified the following: any member is more than welcome to propose new business at the meeting or before the meeting. If the request is to add a piece of new business to the agenda before the meeting, the chair and vice chair will need to approve the agenda. If new business is brought up at the meeting, there is no vetting is needed. The chair and vice chair's emails are as follows: Claudia Lopez-Muniz: claudia.lopez@newdirectionscenter.org and Marybeth Matthews-Adkins: director@family-crisis.org.

Other Member Announcements

- Elvira de la Cruz shared that her organization, Latinos in Virginia Empowerment Center, has opened a support group for people feeling overwhelmed by recent ICE activities in Virginia. The

support group is for both victims and non-victims. The support group is led by a licensed clinician.

- Committee members discussed some issues victims have encountered with increased ICE activities.

Public Comment

- None

2025 Meeting Dates: September 10, 2025, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (in-person)
December 3, 2025, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (virtual)

Closing

- Claudia Lopez-Muniz adjourned the meeting at 12:19 pm.