

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes

Shelter for Help in Emergency-Community Outreach Center
1415 Sachem Place, Suite #1
Charlottesville, VA 22901
January 22, 2020

Members Present:

Jennifer Bourne, Director, Clinch Valley Community Action Inc.
Cathy Easter, Executive Director, Safe Harbor
Linda Ellis-Williams, Director of Programs, YWCA of Central Virginia
Debbie Evans, Division Chief of the Sexual Assault Center & Domestic Violence Program, City of Alexandria Department of Community & Human Services
Robin Gauthier, Executive Director, Samaritan House
Kandy Hayes, Domestic Violence Program Director, Southside Center for Prevention Inc.
Mary Carter Lominack, Executive Director, Shelter for Help in Emergency
Candy Phillips, Executive Director, First Step: A Response to Domestic Violence
Maria Simonetti, Executive Director, The Collins Center & Child Advocacy Center
Kristina Vadas, Manager of Victims Services, DCJS
Kristi VanAudenhove, Executive Director, VSDVAA
Laura Beth Weaver, Assistant Director, Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley
Rebecca Weybright, Executive Director, SARA Charlottesville

Others Present:

Amia Barrows, Victims Services Grant Monitor Supervisor, DCJS
Tierra Smith, Victims Services Grant Program Specialist, DCJS

Welcome & Remarks

The meeting started at 10:04 a.m. with a quorum present. Jennifer Bourne welcomed all members and Tierra Smith, who was previously introduced, recorded the meeting minutes along with Kristina Vadas, Victims Services Manager. All attendees were introduced and physical copies of previously e-mailed materials were disseminated by Tierra Smith.

Approval of November 2019 Minutes

Jennifer Bourne presented the November 4, 2019 minutes for approval. There were no corrections made to the minutes. Cathy Easter made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Maria Simonetti and approved. Kandy Hayes abstained.

Organization Self-Assessment & Summary of Receipts

Tierra Smith provided an overview of the number of Organizational Self-Assessment Summaries received via Professional Standards mailbox. At the time of the meeting, five Summaries had been received from the following organizations:

- Gochland Cares
- The James House Intervention/Prevention Services, Inc.
- The Laurel Center
- Project Horizon, Inc.
- Safe Harbor

These organizations all indicated that they were “Ready” for accreditation. It was proposed by the committee that we consider efforts to encourage submission of Self-Assessment Summaries, which are due by January 31, 2020. The committee revisited having members to send a notice to their colleagues encouraging their submission. The committee agreed that DCJS staff, Tierra Smith, send a follow up e-mail encouraging submission of the Summaries by the specified due date. This correspondence is to be sent out by January 24, 2020.

Vacancies

Jennifer Bourne discussed current member and chair vacancies. It was shared that Caroline Jones had resigned as the Committee Chair and that there was vacancy. It was also shared that Mary Carter Lominack and Rebecca Weybright would no longer be serving at the conclusion of their terms, which occurs in March 2020. Members discussed the process for identifying a new chair. It was discussed that the incoming chair should be a member appointed by the Advisory Committee. Tierra Smith shared with the committee the current composition of members appointed by the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (VSDVAA) and the Virginia Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence. Cathy Easter indicated an interest in the Chair position pending further consideration and information. Jennifer Bourne provided an overview of the Chair responsibilities.

Consultant Status

Committee members requested information on the status of the DCJS site visit consultant position as well as the Professional Standards Coordinator position. Kristina Vadas indicated that the positions have not yet been advertised by DCJS, and that at this time, DCJS is waiting for receipt of Organizational Self-Assessment Summaries. She shared that position ads may be posted in February 2020.

Application Review

Tierra Smith presented a draft of the application and application attachments for review and consideration. The committee discussed the need for establishing review criteria. The committee presented the following options for accreditation:

- Include information in the application materials that a plan of action may be required if haven't met the criteria fully.
- In order to be provisionally accredited, a plan of action to meet criteria must be included.
- Laura Beth Weaver and Becky Weybright volunteered to adapt language about this process from a VSDVAA document.

Jennifer Bourne presented the following application elements to be approved:

- Programs can apply annually until they receive accreditation.
- Committee can require a plan of action for any criteria not met.
- Agencies that do not meet all standards may be provisionally accredited for up to one year with approved agency-designed plan of action.
- Options are: **Accredited, Provisional, Denied**

Linda Ellis-Williams made a motion to approve these elements. The motion was seconded by Robin Gauthier. The elements were approved.

The committee divided into teams to discuss revisions to the application documents. Each team was tasked with reviewing the standards as compared to the information requested within the draft application. Each team also identified which questions correlated with each standard and placed the standard number next to the question. Additional changes to the draft application included:

- Question #2 was revised to “Describe the population(s) you serve and how you ensure compliance with the non-discrimination and Civil Rights requirements to provide services to all, including if you are a population- or culturally-specific organization.”
- Question #3 was removed.
- Question #4 was revised to “Describe your continuing education process for staff and volunteers.”
- Question #8 was revised to “How does your agency ensure there are no interruptions to core services?”
- Question #13 was revised to “Describe safeguards against unauthorized access, fire, loss, or other hazard to client records and/or files.”
- Question #14 was removed.
- Question #15 “of” was changed to “in”
- Question #16 was revised to “How does your agency ensure that services are available and delivered regardless of the client’s race, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, religion, limited English proficiency, immigration status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.”
- Question #19 was revised to “Describe how all survivors seeking assistance from advocates providing crisis intervention services, risk assessment, safety planning, information, **shelter**, and referrals receive those services: a) during regular business hours, b) during nights/weekends, and c) during agency observed holidays.”
- A question was added after Question #23 that says “How does your agency provide shelter to those in imminent danger?”
- Question #24: add to the chart a column for Memorandum of Understanding.
- Question #25 was revised to “How does your agency identify the diverse needs of the community?”
- Question #27 was revised to “Given the diverse needs of your community, how has your agency worked to provide a range of specialized advocacy services to those populations?”
- Question #30 was removed.
- Question #33 was removed.

Changes to the application attachment list included:

- Proposed revision to “Recent training agenda **for Level 2 staff and volunteers.**”
- Proposed revision to “Ethical behavior policy **or Code of Ethics.**”
- Possibly remove “VAWA Compliance Checklist.”

Committee members agreed that additional revisions were warranted following this exercise and a vote would not take place today on final approval of the application.

Site Visit Checklist and Site Visit Questions

The committee divided into teams to discuss revisions to the draft site visit checklist and questions. Each team was tasked with reviewing the standards as compared to the information requested within the two draft documents.

Each team identified which questions on the **Accreditation Site Visit Checklist** correlated with each standard and placed the standard number next to the question. Additional changes included:

- Remove “Show the plan that protects against the interruption of core services.”
- Remove “Describe your collaborative efforts across agencies.”
- Proposed revision to “Show the informed **consent**, written, and reasonably time-limited client release of information form.”
- Proposed revision to “Show data report of community engagement and prevention programming activities.”

Each team identified which questions on the **Accreditation Site Visit: Questions asked by DCJS Consultant** correlated with each standard and placed the standard number next to the question. Additional changes included:

- Remove “If the agency does not have documentation for training requirements, why?”
- Remove “Show data report of emergency shelter requests AND services provided.”
- Remove the references to the charts in the application from the last two questions.

Professional Standards Website FAQ

Tierra Smith presented the content featured within the DCJS Professional Standards FAQ document that was developed by the previous Professional Standards Coordinator following the Professional Standards Webinar held on November 21, 2019. The committee proposed that the DCJS Consultant be referred to as the Professional Standards Consultant pending formal naming by DCJS. The committee requested that the language not suggest that applicants must use the Department of Justice Civil Rights Training in order to meet civil rights requirements. Several other minor changes were also requested.

Other Discussion

The committee noted the following to consider in the future:

- There may be a need to plan training/webinars if common technical assistance needs start to emerge.
- May consider releasing a survey about why agencies decided not to apply.
- The committee will plan to review the application components each fall.
- Additional discussion needed on when an agency is denied accreditation.

Closing Remarks

Laura Beth Weaver motioned that Cathy Easter be appointed the committee chair. Debbie Evans seconded this motion. The motion was approved. The committee thanked Cathy for agreeing to this role and congratulations were offered by attendees. Appreciation and thanks were also offered to Cartie Lominack and Becky Weybright for their work with the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

SUMMARY

Action Items

- By January 24, Tierra Smith will send out follow up e-mail correspondence to the sexual and domestic violence field encouraging submission of Organizational Self-Assessment Summaries.
- Tierra Smith and Kristina Vadas will revise the draft application and attachment list with edits proposed by the committee.
- Tierra Smith and Kristina Vadas will revise the draft Site Visit Checklist with edits proposed by the committee.
- Tierra Smith and Kristina Vadas will revise the Accreditation Site Visit: Questions Asked by the DCJS Consultant with edits proposed by the committee.
- Tierra Smith will make revisions to the DCJS Professional Standards FAQ Webpage.
- Tierra Smith will provide Application Coversheet template to the committee.
- Laura Beth Weaver and Becky Weybright will draft language about the application process.

Decisions/Votes:

- The committee elected Cathy Easter to be the committee chair.
- The committee developed and approved the following elements regarding applying for accreditation:
 - Programs can apply annually until they receive accreditation.
 - Committee can require a plan of action for any criteria not met.
 - Agencies that do not meet all standards may be provisionally accredited for up to one year with approved agency-designed plan of action.
 - Options are: *Accredited, Provisional, Denied*
- The committee made additional revisions to the draft application, attachment list, site visit checklist, and site visit questions. A vote on these documents was postponed.
- The committee agreed to postpone a discussion about when an agency is denied accreditation.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 25, 2020

10am-4pm

Albemarle County Police Department, Training Room B