

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2026, 9:00 a.m. – 11:43 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

Pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 2.2-3708.3

Members Present:

Judy Castele, Executive Director, Project Horizon¹
Cori Davis, Program Director, Bedford Domestic Violence Services²
Debra Evans, Division Chief, Alexandria Sexual Assault Center and Domestic Violence Program
Nancy Fowler, Director, Office of Family Violence, Virginia DSS
Lindsey Gray, Regional Operations Coordinator, Safe House Project³
Avery Harper, Executive Director, The Phoenix Project
Kelly McCoy Meade, Executive Director, Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley
Faith Power, Executive Director, The Laurel Center⁴
Madeline Torres, Court Advocate and Counselor, YWCA Richmond
Kristina Vadas, Manager of Victims Services, Virginia DCJS
Laura Beth Weaver, Director of Advocacy and Member Support, Virginia Sexual and Domestic
Violence Action Alliance
Stacy Ziebell, Program Manager, Fairfax Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

Members Absent:

Timika Cousins, Executive Director, The Faces Behind a Purpose for You

Professional Standards Team Members Present:

Kori Harris, Sexual and Domestic Violence Standards and Response Coordinator, Virginia DCJS
Amber Stanwix, Professional Standards Operations Coordinator, Virginia DCJS

DCJS Staff Present:

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

¹ Judy Castele left the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

² Cori Davis joined the meeting at 9:53 a.m.

³ Lindsey Gray joined the meeting at 10:34 a.m.

⁴ Faith Power joined the meeting at 9:17 a.m.

Members of the Public Present:

TraQuann Buskey, Injury Violence and Prevention Program, Virginia Commonwealth University
Lindsay Cassada, Chesterfield Domestic and Sexual Violence Resource Center
Gwendolyn D'Aiutolo, Domestic Violence Community Educator, Action in Community Through Service (ACTS)
Shannon Freeman, Contract Administrator, Office of Family Violence, Virginia DSS
Stan Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Action in Community Through Service (ACTS)
Cassandra Michelle, Project Empower, Virginia Commonwealth University
Ginger Wrenn, Senior Advocate, Family Violence and Sexual Assault Unit

Welcome & Remarks

The meeting was called to order by Kelly McCoy Meade at 9:02 a.m. A quorum was present. As there have been several changes to the composition of the Committee, the group, as well as members of the public, introduced themselves.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the June 30, 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 4-0. Stacy Ziebell and Debra Evans abstained from the vote.

Travel Reimbursements

Amber Stanwix provided a brief overview of the requirements for travel reimbursements. She explained how to complete the reimbursement form and provided several other reminders.

Professional Standards Update

Kori Harris provided several updates from the DCJS Professional Standards Team. She informed the group that she and Amber Stanwix have identified the first four agencies that will move forward to the site visit portion of the application process. She informed the group that both agencies that were required to file annual verification forms did so by the deadline. No issues were reported by those agencies.

Ms. Harris asked if the time period for revising the Professional Standards should be moved to five years to be consistent with the accreditation period. The group agreed to do so. She asked if the number of agencies per application round should be modified from 20 to 12. The group agreed that the number should remain at 20 to allow as many agencies as possible to be accredited.

Ms. Harris inquired about any impacts that agencies are experiencing due to recent fluctuations in funding availability. She also discussed the potential of creating a waiver process for agencies that may not be able to move forward in the accreditation process. After considering the topic, the group agreed to move this item to the agenda of the next meeting for further deliberation.

Background on Language of Standard #4

At the prior meeting, the group asked about the language in Standard #4. Amber Stanwix provided some background regarding how the Committee had come to agree on the present language. She also provided an example from standards published by the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, which reads, "The Board establishes the agency's mission statement and policies necessary to carry out the mission, helps secure financial support, and is legally responsible and accountable for the organization." The group agreed to modify the language of Standard #4 to mirror the language from the Missouri standard.

Report on Research from Other States

Amber Stanwix provided information to the group regarding research she conducted on the standards available in other states. In particular, the group had asked her to focus on the topics of background checks, the protection of records, and training.

During the discussion on background checks, a member of the group discussed the federal requirements already in place and asked if the group could incorporate those into the Professional Standards. Another member suggested that the group look at the barrier crimes included in federal legislation and compare those to legislation that exists in Virginia. A third member pointed out that, for agencies within a local government, there may be restrictions regarding changes to background checks.

The group discussed potential self-disclosure requirements, such that an employee would be required to self-disclose a crime within a certain time period. The group agreed to look at language regarding self-disclosure and compare the lists of barrier crimes at the next meeting.

Ms. Stanwix led the group in a brief review of the current Standards concerning client records. She provided examples of language from other states. Several members of the group identified language from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape as language that could potentially be used in the Professional Standards. Ms. Stanwix will include that language in a draft that the group will review at the next meeting.

The group then discussed training. Ms. Stanwix provided general language from several other states, as well as examples of requirements regarding hours of training and essential topics. Several members of the group expressed approval of the language regarding staff who provide indirect services. They felt that language was easier to understand than the current levels in the Professional Standards. Overall, however, the group felt that the topic of training was too large

to address in the time left. They agreed to have a longer, more comprehensive discussion at the next meeting.

Discussion Regarding Potential Modifications to the Structure of the Professional Standards

The group discussed the following modifications that had been suggested previously for the Professional Standards.

Tiered Accreditation

The group discussed a tiered accreditation system. This sparked a robust conversation regarding what the tiers could consist of, whether they would indicate a value assignment to different agencies, and whether the Professional Standards should represent the bare minimum or be aspirational. Some members felt that having a tiered system could create unnecessary complications, while others felt that it could encourage agencies to provide more services. There was discussion surrounding whether a higher tier should mean that an agency would be eligible for a higher level of funding. The group did not come to a consensus on this topic but agreed to give it further consideration at a later date.

Children's Services

The group discussed children's services. The group agreed that this is a critical area and should be included in the Professional Standards. After reviewing language that was previously included in the Standards, the group agreed to compare that to language from other states at the next meeting before deciding on how to move forward.

Prevention

The group discussed whether to reinstate prevention services as a Professional Standard and, if so, what that language would look like. The group agreed with the idea of including prevention but also wanted to ensure that there was enough flexibility for agencies to work within the scope of their communities and their capacities. There was agreement that any potential standard should be expansive in its definition. Committee member Stacy Ziebell agreed to draft some language that the group will review at the next meeting, and the group agreed to look at the Training Matrix to see if any additions should be made there.

Other

Faith Power recognized Laura Beth Weaver for her service to the Committee and thanked her for her contributions.

Public Comment

Lindsay Cassada of the Chesterfield Domestic and Sexual Violence Resource Center offered comments regarding her support of a tiered accreditation system. She encouraged the group to consider the impact of such a system, as well as the language used to describe any potential tiers.

Closing Remarks

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m.

Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 10th, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Libbie Mill Branch of the Henrico Public Library.