

# Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Meadowdale Library  
4301 Meadowdale Boulevard  
North Chesterfield, VA 23234

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Final Minutes

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## Committee members present:

Kathy Anderson, Teresa Berry, Elvira De la Cruz, Sanu Dieng, Marva Dunn, Senator Barbara Favola, Nancy Fowler, Kate Hanger, Claudia Lopez-Muniz, Melissa McMenemy, Kike Oliver (for Nichele Carver), Unique Phillips, Kristina Vadas, Kristi VanAudenhove

## Committee members absent:

Maria Altonen, Autumn Edmond, Kristen Howard, Toni Zollicoffer

## Guests in attendance:

Britney Beal (Virginia Department of Social Services), Eileen Longenecker (Supreme Court of Virginia), Andi Martin (Department of Criminal Justice Services), Andrea Sumter (Department of Criminal Justice Services)

## Welcome, Introductions, and Remarks

Committee Chair Teresa Berry called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. Committee members introduced themselves. Teresa Berry determined that a quorum was present.

## Approval of March 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Nancy Fowler made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 16, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Elvira de le Cruz. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

## Domestic Violence Action Team (DVAT) & Promising Practices Guide

Nancy Fowler provided an overview of the Domestic Violence Action Team, which is comprised of local domestic violence service providers, and staff from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (VSDVAA), other state agencies and organizations with an interest in domestic violence issues.

- The purpose and mission of DVAT is to improve services for victims of domestic violence.
- DVAT develops trainings, improvements to data collection systems and developed the Promising Practices Guide, which is a “resource for domestic violence advocates, supervisors and directors that clearly describes good services.”
- Within the Guide, each entry has a commitment to focus on the survivor voice through a racial/social justice lens and a trauma informed lens.
- The Guide explores the types of services offered in shelters, in community, and with partners.

- The sections are divided into these sub-topics: related statutes; professional standards; useful terms; facts about domestic violence; racial/social justice topics; trauma informed topics; promising practices (highlighting local agencies and some national promising practices); COVID related issues; and additional resources.
- Future steps for the guide are adding survivor voices, updating and continuing to share more promising practices, and improving website presence.
- To access the guide: [https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/domestic\\_violence/index.cgi](https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/domestic_violence/index.cgi)
- VDSS is planning to turn the guide into a searchable format document.

### **Proposed Sexual and Domestic Violence Agency Needs Assessment Survey**

Tabled as Kristen Howard (Virginia State Crime Commission) was not in attendance.

### **Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance Member Survey**

Kristi VanAudenhove provided an overview of the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance's (VSDVAA) member survey.

- VSDVAA is developing a 10-year plan to strengthen sexual assault and domestic violence agencies. As part of the 10-year plan, VSDVAA established a Sustainability Planning Alliance, surveyed membership regarding sustainability issues, conducted focus group sessions, and is completing a needs assessment with VDSS for an upcoming grant funding opportunity.
- The Sustainability Planning Alliance (SPA) is a work group that includes six executive directors of local agencies with representation across the state and diverse experience and backgrounds.
- VSDVAA Surveyed directors of 72 member sexual and domestic violence (SDV) agencies, with a 54% completion rate (39 responses). The survey asked questions about the current funding landscape and impact of COVID. The survey included questions about budget size, sustainable fund balances, and sources of funding.
- There were 38 focus group participants and six groups.
- Some notable results of the survey and focus groups:
  1. Budget Sizes: Large range among programs (26% less than \$500k/year; 40% between \$500k and \$1M/year; 18% between \$1M and \$2M/year; 16% over \$2M/year).
  2. Sustainable Fund Balance: 8% no fund balance, 46% less than 3 months operating fund balance.
  3. Sources of Funding: 80% rely on government (federal/state/local) funding for more than 50% of budget. Nearly all agencies raise funds in the community; for most this makes up under 10% of budget, for some it is well over 20%.
  4. Gap Between Current Funding and Need: Agencies estimated this gap between \$200,000 and \$800,000. Identified Needs: Expand prevention initiatives; replace aging shelters; raise salaries and benefits to competitive levels; and, fund development and administrative support.
  5. Other factors that impact budget needs: Community availability of wrap around services; the economy of the service area; age of the population; geography; and, cultural/racial makeup of the community.
  6. How can we address cash flow and increase fund balances: Ensure that government invoices are consistently paid within 30 days from start of contract; expand support for fund development; explore options for pooled overhead; and, develop structures that work for regional approaches to services.

7. Impact of the Pandemic: Steady increases in crisis service requests, need for shelter, and ongoing counseling and advocacy; largest increase was in requests for virtual services; and, decreases in 24-hour accompaniment services and prevention programs.
  8. Pandemic related challenges: Safety practices constantly evolved and access to PPE, vaccines and testing varied dramatically; 84% of agencies reported higher than usual staff turnover and challenges with hiring; more than half of agencies had trouble maintaining 24/7 services; and, community donations of time, goods, and money all decreased significantly.
- VDSS contracted with VSDVAA to conduct a needs assessment of domestic violence programs for an upcoming VDSS American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding opportunity. The VDSS ARPA funding opportunity will promote vaccines, testing, health care partnerships, and workforce retention. The needs assessment will be used to help develop the funding opportunity. The needs assessment started in April 2022 and will be completed by the end of August so that VDSS may release the solicitation in the fall of 2022.
  - VSDVAA's 10-year plan should be distributed to members by the end of the year.

Following this presentation, the Committee discussed the need to better address language access for victims to receive court and law enforcement services. The Committee also discussed the need to address reproductive coercion, which will be a discussion point at the next VSDVAA's Director's Forum.

Senator Favola moved that a workgroup be formed out of the Committee to make recommendations to funding agencies based on the presentations and discussion today on language access. The motion was seconded by Kathy Anderson and passed unanimously. The following Committee members volunteered for the workgroup: Kathy Anderson, Elvira De la Cruz, Sanu Dieng, Kate Hanger, Claudia Lopez-Muniz, Unique Phillips, and Kristi VanAudenhove.

### **State Agency Funding Updates**

- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
  - Kristina Vadas provided the Committee with an update.
  - ARPA Victim Services Grant Program Restoration funding recipients received a 12-month extension on their current SFY 2022 grant. The new end date is June 30, 2023.
  - There is additional ARPA money in the SFY 2023 proposed state budget. The budget is not yet final. More information to come on possible additional ARPA funds for DCJS grant recipients.
  - The Code of Virginia section for the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Victim Fund was modified to add a third purpose area: support for sexual assault/forensic nursing. There is funding to support this grant program and this new purpose area in the SFY 2023 proposed state budget.
- Virginia Department of Health: no update
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
  - Kike Oliver provided the Committee with an update.
  - The Rent Relief Program is no longer accepting applications as the program is closing.
  - A statewide homeless assistance funding announcement will be released by the end of June 2022.
- Virginia Department of Social Services

- Nancy Fowler provided the Committee with an update.
- Grants for domestic violence services to underserved populations were renewed for SFY 2023.
- The VDSS's SFY 2022 domestic violence grant ends June 30, 2022. Notice of intent to award for SFY 2023 was recently sent out to recipients.
- VDSS has an ARPA supported grant program that supports both domestic and sexual violence service agencies. This funding opportunity has not yet been posted.

**Past Business**

- Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Funding
    - Nancy Fowler reported that the General Assembly conference report shows a proposed budget with \$2.3 million\* going to VDSS for domestic violence prevention funding. Budget language added that solicitations should be posted by August 1.
- \* Post-meeting update: proposed funding level corrected to be \$2.65 million*

**New Business**

- Kristina Vadas provided the Committee with a summary of [House Bill 444](#) concerning Virtual Public Meetings.
  - HB 444 provides for more options for virtual meetings even when Virginia is not in a state of emergency. It goes into effect September 1, 2022. The Committee can hold half of its meetings virtually (two times per year). The new legislation also includes additional reasons a person can participate virtually, including that their principal residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location.
  - These changes could allow the Committee to meet in person in September and March, and virtually in December and June. Virtual attendance for the September meeting will be available to members if needed.
  - The Committee will vote on a new electronic meeting policy at the September meeting. Kristina will send out a draft policy before then.
  - The Committee discussed that if they agreed to virtual meetings twice a year, and if the group lost participation in virtual meetings, they will revisit the policy.
  - For virtual meetings, members must be heard by the public and, when available, also be visible. DCJS purchased a new camera for hybrid in-person meetings to allow for virtual attendees to see anyone speaking at the physical meeting location.

**Other Member Announcements**

- None

**Public Comment**

- None

**2022 Meeting Dates:**

- Wednesday, September 14, 2022 (in-person)
- Wednesday, December 7, 2022

**Closing**

- Teresa Berry adjourned the meeting at 12:27 p.m.