

## **Illinois Attorney General's Office**

### **Violent Crime Victims Advisory Committee (VCAC)**

#### **Public Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** August 1, 2025

**Time:** 10:00 AM – Noon CST

**Location:** Zoom (Virtual)

**Chair:** Dr. Kathryn Bocanegra

#### **1. Welcome and Housekeeping**

Theresa Geary opened the meeting with housekeeping announcements, including reminders that the session is a public meeting governed by the Open Meetings Act and being recorded. She reviewed Zoom participation expectations such as remaining on camera when possible, muting while not speaking, and using the chat for comments.

Public comment was reserved for the end of the meeting.

#### **2. Roll Call**

Roll call was conducted alphabetically by first name. Members in attendance included Amanda Pyron, Dr. Rachel Garthe, Dr. Sonia Mathies-Dinizulu, Edwin Galetti, Erica Katava, State's Attorney Julia Rietz, Dr. Kathryn Bocanegra, Kathy Daniher, Maria Garza, Melissa Ellison, Terry Burnside, and Xochil Guerrero.

Quorum was met.

#### **3. Updates from the Crime Victims and Violence Prevention (CVVP) Bureau**

Presented by Christelle Perez, Illinois Attorney General's Office

Christelle Perez provided administrative updates

#### **4. Framing of the Q2 Meeting**

Dr. Kathryn Bocanegra provided an overview of the meeting's focus on understanding cross-sector partnerships that enhance victim services and prevention.

She framed the discussion around two objectives:

1. Deepening understanding of the philanthropic role in community safety and victim prevention efforts.
2. Reviewing the administration of the Violent Crime Victims Assistance (VCVA) Grant Program to ensure alignment with VCAC's statutory responsibilities.

Dr. Bocanegra emphasized the importance of equity, prevention, and data-informed decision-making in the committee's deliberations.

## **5. Guest Presenter: Esther Franco-Payne, Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities (PSPC)**

Esther Franco-Payne shared an overview of the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities, a coalition of more than 50 philanthropic organizations working collaboratively to promote peace, safety, and justice in Chicago and across Illinois.

Key points included:

- Collaborative Philanthropy Model: PSPC brings together funders to align strategies, pool resources, and coordinate investments that advance safety and equity through community-led approaches.
- Philanthropy's Role in Violence Prevention: Franco-Payne emphasized philanthropy's ability to fill critical funding gaps through flexible, multi-year investments that support both immediate and long-term solutions.
- Strategic Funding Priorities: PSPC's funding priorities include community violence intervention, youth development, trauma recovery and healing, and police accountability.
- Learning and Accountability: The coalition applies a data-driven and equity-centered approach to track outcomes, ensure transparency, and adapt strategies based on community feedback.
- Cross-Sector Collaboration: Franco-Payne encouraged deeper coordination among philanthropy, state agencies, and local organizations to create sustainable systems of prevention, intervention, and healing.

## **6. Violent Crime Victims Assistance (VCVA) Program Update**

Presented by VCVA Program Staff

The VCVA Program supports the development and improvement of services that recognize the rights, needs, and interests of crime victims in Illinois. It ensures that victims have access to information, advocacy, and quality services.

Key highlights included:

- The VCVA Program is funded through the Violent Crime Victims Assistance Fund, established in 1984 and supported by fines collected from individuals convicted of crimes of violence, as well as state general revenue funds.
- Annual grant applications are accepted from eligible agencies including units of government and nonprofit organizations that provide or coordinate victim and witness assistance programs.
- The grant cycle runs from July 1 through June 30 of the following year.
- Funded agencies are required to comply with quarterly reporting, personnel documentation, and fiscal accountability standards.
- The VCAC plays a statutory advisory role in reviewing and guiding VCVA priorities to ensure

that grantmaking reflects equitable, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered approaches statewide.

### **7. Public Commentary**

Public comment was opened. No formal comments were submitted.

### **8. Closing Remarks**

Dr. Bocanegra thanked presenters and attendees for their engagement, .

The next meeting date will be announced through the Attorney General's Office and shared directly with VCAC members.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.