

**Illinois Attorney General's Office
Violent Crime Victims Advisory Committee (VCAC)**

Public Meeting Minutes

Date: June 13, 2025

Time: 10 AM – Noon CST

Location: Zoom (Virtual)

Chair: Dr. Kathryn Bocanegra

1. Welcome and Housekeeping

- Theresa from the Attorney General's Office opened the meeting with Zoom logistics, noting that it is a public meeting governed by the Open Meetings Act and is being recorded.
- Instructions were provided for using the chat, Q&A, and troubleshooting technical difficulties.
- Public comment was scheduled for the end of the meeting.

2. Roll Call

- Roll call conducted alphabetically by first name.
- Members in attendance included Amanda Pyron, Dr. Garthe, Dr. Mathies-Dinizulu, Edwin Galetti, Erica Katava, SA Julia Reitz, Dr. Kathryn Bocanegra, Kathy Daniher, Maria Garza, Melissa Ellison, Terry Burnside, and Xochil Guerrero.
- Quorum met

3. Recognition of Outgoing VCAC Members

Dr. Bocanegra offered gratitude and recognition to outgoing members who completed their two-year terms

4. Introduction of New VCAC Members

Dr. Bocanegra introduced newly appointed members and highlighted their experience and contributions:

- **Edwin Galetti** – VP of Violence Prevention at UCAN Chicago; over 20 years of experience in trauma-informed programming.
- **Xochil Guerrero** – Licensed clinical social worker and doctoral student at UIC; works on justice-informed practices and family impacts of incarceration.
- **Maria Garza** – Co-founder of Challenge to Change (Aurora); advocate for restorative justice and women survivors.
- **Dr. Sonia Dinizulu** – Licensed clinical psychologist at University of Chicago; trauma and resilience expert, leads the U-STAR program.
- **Dr. Rachel Garthe** – Director of Violence Prevention Research Lab at UIUC; led the IL Violence Prevention Plan (2025–2029).

- **Terry Burnside** – Executive Director Emeritus of House of Hope in Peoria; grassroots leader in trauma-informed community work.
- **Julia Rietz** – State’s Attorney of Champaign County since 2004; adjunct professor at UIUC Law.
- **Chief Ana Lalley** – Chief of Police, Elgin PD (not present but acknowledged).

5. Overview of VCAC Structure and Responsibilities

Presented by **Christelle Pérez** (IL AG’s Office):

- VCAC is a legislatively governed body tasked with:
 - Studying Illinois laws and services for crime victims.
 - Promoting research and recommending victim-centered legislation.
 - Raising public awareness and improving access to programs (e.g., compensation, Address Confidentiality Program).
 - Guiding grantmaking priorities—\$17M in victim and domestic violence grants awarded in FY25.
- Membership includes a diverse cross-sector group: law enforcement, legal, education, healthcare, survivor advocates, and public members.
- The committee meets quarterly; quorum is 9 members.

6. Guest Presenters: Amy Solomon and Betsy Pearl, Council on Criminal Justice

Amy Solomon and Betsy Pearl from the Council on Criminal Justice presented on the DOGE-directed termination of DOJ grants and its disproportionate impact on community-based violence intervention efforts. They highlighted that Illinois lost at least 13 grants, with nonprofit CVI programs and technical assistance infrastructure among the hardest hit. Their public dashboard tracks these cuts and was offered as a tool for transparency, advocacy, and recovery planning.

7. Guest Speaker: Amandy Pyron, The Network

Amanda Pyron, Executive Director of The Network, provided an overview of gender-based violence (GBV) service needs in Illinois, including intimate partner violence and sexual assault. She emphasized the importance of coordinated partnerships across the state to support survivors and advance prevention. Pyron also noted that shifting priorities under the new federal administration may have implications for future funding and policy direction in this area.

8. Public Comment Period

- Time reserved at the end of the session; no formal public comments were recorded

9. Adjournment

- Meeting concluded with next date set for Friday August 1st, 10 AM - Noon