



Arizona Coalition for Victim Services (ACVS)
Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024
 Virtual Meeting –via Zoom

I. Call to Order – Karina Aragon

- a. Meeting was conducted virtually on January 17th via Zoom and called to order 10:01am.

Attendees

Ryan Clark, AGO Office of Victim Services	Ashtyn Buechler, NCVC
Erica Williams, Individual Member	Dorinda Johns, ACJC, Crime Victim Services Program Manager
Karina Aragon, Mesa PD, Victim Services	Jamie Balson, LSCVA
Alice Ghareib, DOVES	Christina Wesnitzer, Yavapai County Attorney's Office
Stacey Rodriguez, Yavapai County	Carrie Howe, ADCRR, Office of Victim Services
Lauren Barnes, AZ DES	Cari Garrison, ADCRR, Office of Victim Services
Jacqueline Lopez, Pinal County Attorney's Offices, Victim Services	Tina Ashelford, Mohave County Attorney, Victim Services
Connie Chapman, AVAA	Ada Acero, ACESDV, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator
Eva Salazar, Yuma County Attorney's Office, Victim Services	Samantha Weiss, AZ DES, Interpersonal Violence Program Specialist
Amy Palisano, La Frontera/EMPACT, Trauma Healing Services	Melissa Brickhouse Thomas, Glendale PD Victim Services
Bianca Harper, ACASI	Suellen Palya, POMC
Nick Pawlowski, DCS, Victim Services Unit	

II. Welcome 10:05am

III. Approval of November 2023 Meeting Minutes

- a. No corrections, 1st motion to approve by Cari Garrison, 2nd by Tina Ashelford.

IV. Presentation on Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry's Victim/Offender Dialogue Program, Carrie Howe (chowe@azadc.gov) and Cari Garrison (cgarrison@azadc.gov), Office of Victim Services

- a. ADCRR assists victims when the offender is in prison.
- b. Victim Offender Dialogue Program (VOD)
- i. VOD is a relatively new program.
 - ii. A victim of a crime or surviving family member meet face to face with offender in a safe, structured setting .
 - iii. Victim initiated, centered, and driven – the victim needs to make the request to get process started.
 - iv. Unique to restorative justice, not a form of conflict resolution, some victim are seeking answers to their questions.



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- v. Program requirements:
 - 1. Process is victim initiated, centered, driven.
 - 2. Moves forward on victim's needs and victim's safety (do no harm).
 - 3. Offender must admit their role and take full accountability for their crime
 - 4. No appeals can be pending.
 - 5. Both sides sign confidentiality agreements.
 - 6. Participation cannot legally benefit offender and offender cannot use their participation in support of clemency at a parole hearing.
 - 7. Typical requirement of three years served so far in prison (can be waived).
- vi. Similar programs can be found in other states. Texas has recognized that victims have a right to participate in victim/offender dialogue.
- vii. Additional details about the program:
 - 1. Dialogue can take the form of letter exchange, virtual meeting, or a face-to-face meeting.
 - 2. No groups - only one victim and one offender in a meeting.
 - 3. A support person can be at the facility with a victim, but cannot attend the meeting.
 - 4. VOD always has two co-facilitators present and the participants can take a break at any time can take a break at any time. One of the co-facilitators does a debriefing for the offender afterwards. Offenders can request that the facilitator request a counselor or chaplain for offender afterwards. Facilitator follows up in a week.
 - 5. Referrals come from ADCRR advocate, other agencies' advocates, or from prison staff.
 - 6. Main facilitator handles 2-3 cases at a time.
 - 7. Current waiting period of about 6 months.
 - 8. Option for victim to visit prison before VOD to mitigate stress on day of – go over specifics, who enters room first.
 - 9. Correctional officers present, have to sign confidentiality agreement.
- viii. Referrals are routed to Cari Garrison, please send to cgarrison@azadc.gov.
- ix. Re: lifetime Injunctions per Jamie Balson - LSCVA filed a motion to temporarily suspend LTI for victim who wanted to participate in VOD.
- x. Brochure will be posted to ACVS website.
- xi. Victims with questions can call (602) 541-1853.

V. Option for two-year membership – Karina Aragon

- a. All in favor of having this as an option but would like to have the choice of either one- or two-years membership.

VI. Arizona Victim Assistance Academy (AVAA) – Connie Chapman

avaacademy@gmail.com; info@azcvcs.net

- a. Basic will possibly be scheduled for July 22, 2024.
- b. Is the group interested in a presentation on tribal victimization?



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Meeting Minutes
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- c. Leadership training in June, please email Connie with any topics of interest.

VII. Legislative Priorities – Ryan Clark, AGO (ryan.clark@azag.gov)

VIII. ACESDV – Ada Acero, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator (ada@acesdv.org)

- a. Waiting for these bills to be filed, will be able to update soon on bill numbers and sponsors;
 - i. Villegas is sponsoring Survivor bill of rights.
 - ii. Terech is sponsoring a bill establishing rights for SA victims in hospital settings.
 - iii. Gutierrez sponsoring the right to choose sexual assault exam provider.
 - iv. Burch sponsoring bills allowing DV survivors to terminate their leases, based on advocate and medical statements.
 - v. HB 2234 sponsoring firearm transfer bill, adding DV misdemeanants as prohibited possessors and providing administrative processes for removing firearms.
- b. Strategic focus for the session is on the VOCA fix. With a 60-70% cut in funding, legal aid services will be decimated with some agencies closing. Sexual assault services will be limited, with services such as counseling and long-term support ending. Domestic violence services will be significantly impacted with some shelters closing and others eliminating programs such as legal assistance, counseling, and mobile services. The executive budget is being presented on the 17th, if VOCA backfill is included, we believe this might be successful.

IX. Bills that ACESDV is either opposing or supporting that they have identified as having a significant impact on survivors:

- a. Opposition list:
 - i. HB 2094 would amend Arizona’s custody statute to grant any child over fourteen the “right to select the parent whom the child chooses regarding custody and parenting time.” On its face, this legislation seems like a vehicle for children to be able to choose the parent with whom they are most comfortable, while ignoring the frequently contentious nature of child custody. However, this bill exposes children to greater trauma by forcing them to make decisions on their own, forcing a choice between two loved parents in the best of circumstances, and potentially placing them in danger in the worst of circumstances. This bill encourages parents to coerce their children, puts undue pressure on children, and opens children up to significant consequences when domestic violence exists.
 - ii. HB 2038 would make it a class 5 felony to record a conversation without the permission of all parties. This removes the ability of survivors to record conversations with an abuser, documenting harm for law enforcement or court proceedings. Subjecting a survivor to criminal charges for protecting themselves and documenting harm they have experienced is outrageous.
- b. Supporting:
 - i. HB 2238 establishes a severe threat order of protection.
 - ii. HB 2076 includes killing of pets in domestic violence categorization.



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Meeting Minutes
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IX. State Agency Coordinating Team (SACT) – Funders Reports

c. VRP – Ryan Clark, AGO (ryan.clark@azag.gov)

i. VRP Agencies:

1. All agencies have had their budget proposals approved and their fully executed award agreements uploaded into the system. First, installs of the award are being processed currently and second installments will begin once the first installments have been disbursed.
2. We are currently working on our next fiscal year system rollover and the FY25 Performance Reviews will be available in the next two weeks for agencies. While this is typically due to early February, we are pushing back the deadline to accommodate the delayed access. Agencies will be notified as soon as this is available.

ii. Education:

1. Basic and Advanced Victims' Rights presentation dates listed through June have been posted on the AGO website for open registration.
2. Reminder that FY24 Advanced Victims' Rights topic is Restitution.
3. One weekend Basic presentation will be held this year, date to be decided and announced.
4. Visit [Victims' Rights Education | Arizona Attorney General \(azag.gov\)](https://www.azag.gov/victims-rights-education) for presentation dates and more detail.

iii. Law Enforcement

1. All law enforcement agencies using the statewide multi-copy forms should have received the most recent version of the form. Any problems or questions can be directed to OVSVRP@azag.gov. We are currently discussing no longer printing the forms starting in either FY25 or FY26, due to the cost of the forms and their availability via TraCS and PDF. More information to follow.

a. ACJC – Dorinda - djohns@azcjc.gov (no update)

b. DPS-VOCA – Carla Uyeda (cuyeda@azdps.gov) – not present

c. GOYFF – not present

d. DES – Samantha Weiss, IVP program specialist (sweiss@azdes.gov)

- i. Starting in May, DES will be hosting a four-part webinar series with the National Center on DV, Trauma, and Mental Health, ACESDV and Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition. The four-part series will focus on serving survivors in a shelter setting with substance use disorder and mental health concerns. ACESDV will be sending out save the dates in March with registrations shortly behind that.

e. DHS – not present

X. Committee Reports

d. Executive Board Report – Chair Amy Bocks (not present)

e. Treasurer's Report – Karina Aragon (karina.aragon@mesaaz.gov)



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- i. Report as of December 31, 2023
 - 1. ACVS: \$23,473.52
 - 2. AVAA: - \$13,604.05
 - 3. ACJC Match: \$24,082.05
 - 4. Relocation: \$350
 - 5. TOTAL: \$34,301.52
- f. Relocation Committee – Karina
 - i. Application must come from an advocate.

XI. New Business/Open Forum

- a. Amy Palmisano, La Frontera/EMPACT, Tauma Healing Services – partnering with ASU again for Take Back the Night. The event will be held on Thursday, Apr 4th on the Social Services lawn at the ASU Tempe campus from 5:00pm - 9:00pm.
 - i. Please send survivors interested in speaking or anyone interested in tabling to Amy.
 - ii. Jamie suggests reaching out to ACESDV Share Committee.

XII. Next Meeting

- a. March 20th, 10:00am via Zoom.

XIII. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned by Karina Aragon at 11:00am.