



Office of Victim Services

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ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES

PREAMBLE

Article 22, § 623(14) provides the Office of Victim Services (OVS) with the statutory authority to establish an advisory council "...to assist in formulation of policies on the problems of crime victims and to provide recommendations to the director to improve the delivery of services to victims by the office." OVS elects to establish such council in the following manner:

MEMBERSHIP

There is hereby established an Advisory Council on victim issues. The goal shall be to maintain a council of 16 members appointed by the Director of OVS, who have demonstrated an active interest in or obtained professional knowledge of the problems, needs and treatment of victims. OVS designates standing membership for the following:

- the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence;
- the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault; and
- the New York State Children's Alliance on the Advisory Council.

Advisory Council members shall maintain active membership in one of the five regional crime victim service provider's. It is a goal for membership to reflect the diversity of the state and its people. OVS shall endeavor to maintain a significant level of representation of minority populations. OVS shall solicit nominations from the council, coalitions, and other interested parties on a regular basis for new members or to fill vacancies.

Additionally, members of the Legislature or other individuals having a special interest in victim issues may be invited by OVS to participate on the council as non-voting ex-officio members.

The council shall elect a President and Vice-President at the first meeting of each council year.

TERM OF OFFICE

All members of the council shall be appointed, by the Director of OVS, for an initial term of three-years, beginning on January 1. At the conclusion of an initial term, a council member has the option of a second, three-year term. If a council member is not

interested in a second, three-year term, or leaves the council at any time during any term, such vacancy may be filled no sooner than the following January 1.

STRUCTURE

The council shall have a President and Vice-President and shall organize itself into five standing committees. The council members working within their regional crime victim service provider coalition shall be assigned committee work at the beginning of each council year. The assignments shall be made by OVS and shall rotate at the beginning of each council year. The standing committees are:

1. The **Legislative Committee** shall study and suggest legislation to OVS legal staff for consideration by OVS. The committee shall also monitor legislative efforts related to crime victims and keep the council informed of any relevant proposals or changes.
2. The **Program Committee** shall review, analyze, and report on victims, fiscal, and administrative issues which are common among crime victims programs especially those funded by OVS. The committee shall primarily focus on concerns that directly impact program administration including budgeting, staffing, the grant process, statistical and narrative report forms, monitoring and evaluation and development.
3. The **Compensation & Service Committee** shall inform OVS of victims' unmet needs and advise on possible ways to better serve crime victims in the State of New York. The committee shall review and discuss any victim compensation issues, including information from other sources and states and may make recommendations in regard to compensation applications, benefits, and services.
4. The **Social Justice Committee** shall study the effects of social and economic oppression on marginalized populations of crime victims and report findings and recommendations to OVS.
5. The **Public Outreach Committee** shall notify OVS of efforts to inform crime victims and the general public on victims' issues. The committee shall also link efforts from across the state and offer planning and implementation information to any victim service provider.

OVS may choose from time-to-time establish ad-hoc groupings or task forces to pursue specific issues. These groups shall report to the council and OVS under the aegis of one of the standing committees.

DUTIES

The council shall have the duty to encourage public understanding of the needs of victims and the status of victims' rights. The council shall advise OVS in establishing statewide goals and objectives for advancing services to victims and implementing victims' rights. The council shall have the power to consider any matter relating to the improvement of crime victims' programs and to advise OVS. OVS shall assist the Council by disseminating information to council members relative to reports and follow-up.

Council members shall be an active participant of one of the five regional crime victim service provider coalitions. Council members are responsible for bringing committee work forward at each coalition meeting and are responsible for gathering information from the region and transmitting suggestions and issues back to the council and OVS. OVS shall invite representatives from the council to report to OVS during one quarterly meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Participation on the council by members representing agencies or organizations that may be funded by OVS shall not alone constitute a conflict of interest. No member of the council may use his or her council membership (or title) to advance personal causes or to promote positions not endorsed by the council and OVS. The prohibition shall not be construed to prevent a member from freely speaking as an individual. Employees of OVS shall not serve as a member of the council.

AMENDMENTS TO PROTOCOL

OVS shall regularly review and amend the Advisory Council protocol as appropriate. Suggested amendments to the protocol may be made by the council and submitted in writing to OVS for consideration. The final determination for amendments to the protocol shall rest with OVS.