VOCA Draft Recommendations Meeting

February 8, 2024

1:00 PM

Jeriane has called this meeting to share the proposed recommendations for the General Assembly. This information is being shared with the General Assembly soon – they will receive binders with the information. Once those binders are complete, the information will be shared on our website. This meeting is being recorded and will be added to the website.

If you have a desire to send any letters for NAVAA, please copied us onto the email. If you google the VOCA fund right now, you will see call outs from everywhere pushing congress to do something about it. These recommendations are our final comments unless the GA suggests something different. Last time we spoke, we went over the proposed plan and recommendations. Since then we have received 74 comments. Our intention now is to share our proposed plan to you and to the house on Monday February 12th.

VOCA fund reduction is currently 41%. Taking our FFY23 grant award and dividing it would add it at 14.573M. We currently have 11M in carryforward from the 23 grant. The governor has a recommendation to fund at 16.9M. We are early in the legislative process—this will not be signed until the end of June and could change. We could potentially have 45M, but nothing is permanent.

See letter for chart proposal options

The below outlines the number of agencies responses including those that agreed, disagreed, and neutral. Also included are the compiled comments, which includes the overarching statements regarding the recommendation.

- ***Proposed Recommendation #1*** *– DSS will contract with up to five (5) agencies to distribute the funds*
    - 74 agencies: 34 agree, 17 disagree, and 23 neutral
    - Compiled Comments:
        - Concerns regarding increased administrative costs and bureaucratic processes
        - Disagree with allowing any agency to apply, and instead should be specified agencies with the expertise
        - Some prefer to contract directly with DSS, and others prefer the (five) 5 agencies to be the direct sub recipient of funds to allocate to specified agencies
        - Concerns regarding mixing membership with funding allocations
        - Statement if this occurs that DSS will need to monitor the direct sub recipients, and there should be an appeal process regarding the funding levels since this is a new process
        - Concerns with not allowing direct sub recipients to have VOCA funded members on their board

- ***Proposed Recommendation #2*** *– Contract directly with MSHSP, DeafLEAD, and Legal Aid*
    - 74 agencies: 38 agree, 6 disagree, and 30 neutral

- Compiled Comments:
  - Agreeable if the services are offered statewide
  - Concerned will move from being an advocacy agency to a contractual funder
  - Agree to contract directly, but not increase allocation as some agencies have been allowed to show an increased need and others have not

- ***Proposed Recommendation #3*** *– A cap of $750,000 for non-statewide services to reduce the contract amounts as the VOCA fund is anticipated to continue to decline*
  - 74 agencies: 44 agree, 15 disagree, and 15 are neutral
  - Compiled Comments:
    - Arbitrary, anti-competition, and not needs based
    - Would reduce available services
    - There always should have been a cap in place to stabilize funding
    - There is a disparity between rural and urban areas, and not having a cap will cause issues, especially with increased staff costs
    - Continuing to allocate large amounts to a few programs will make it difficult to use VOCA funds to have an impact on a wide variety of programs
    - Agree if reevaluated each year
    - There will be a trickle-down affect for agencies that refer to these agencies and a $1M cap should be considered
    - This will disproportionately impact Kansas City, and DSS should consider a percentage reduction across providers, and the reduction is not based on data
    - These organizations already have large funders unlike smaller organizations
    - Adversely impacts Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence providers

- ***Proposed Recommendation #4*** *– Agencies receiving $200,000 or less will receive the lesser of $200,000 or their bid amount*
  - 74 agencies: 42 agree, 17 disagree, and 15 are neutral
  - Compiled Comments:
    - The recommendation is arbitrary, anti-competition, not needs based, and confusing
    - Should be distributed based on services provided, the need for services, and history
    - Concerns it will encourage agencies to request the floor amount
    - Large providers have a wider variety of funding sources, and large funding cuts could cripple small programs, even though the award amount is only a small fraction of the overall budget
    - Would make services more equitable
    - All agencies should go through the same application process

- ***Proposed Recommendation #5*** *– Discontinue regional allocations, instead rely upon sub recipients to distribute funds across the region based on demonstrated need across various types of agencies*
  - 74 agencies: 48 agree, 10 disagree, and 16 are neutral
  - Compiled Comments:
    - None of the comments were in favor of the regions, the comments were in regards to the sub recipients which was address in Recommendation #1

- ***Proposed Recommendation #6*** *– DSS will provide a robust training plan including federal training that is available and procure additional training if needed*
    - 74 agencies: 44 agree, 13 disagree, and 17 are neutral
    - Compiled Comments:
        - Would like to continue to receive training from MOCADSV and Kids First
        - This would create confusion and duplication of training
        - Would like more detail on the training plan
        - Concerned with new training
        - DSS should spend time on sustaining the VOCA fund
        - Should be provided by experts, and not DSS
        - Could help agencies with decreased funds

Jeriane reminds that she has hired individuals who are experts in victim services. Two of the staff have been involved with VOCA for over 5 years, then the other two staff has experience either in law enforcement or in front line victimization.

She goes over the categories and funding percentages that are currently being met. There is currently not additional funding to allocate. There were requests to specifically fund only Domestic Violence (DV) and Sexual Violence (SV) services. As stated in the above comment, there are four (4) required reporting categories. For the FFY20 VOCA federal grant, which was liquidated by December 31, 2023, there was 45% Domestic Violence, 11% Sexual Violence, 25% Child Abuse, and 19% Underserved. DSS must meet 10% in each of these categories; therefore, there are allocations to multiple types of agencies.

There have been many questions about where the money is being spent by the agencies. During a previous analysis, 86.5% is spent on personnel and fringe. Below is expenditures for FFY22 and FFY23.

Expenses	FFY22	FFY23
Benefits	13.61%	13.66%
Contractual	2.70%	2.04%
Equipment	0.31%	0.18%
Indirect Costs	3.37%	3.25%
Personnel	70.91%	72.83%
Supplies/Operations	8.18%	7.26%
Travel/Training	0.92%	0.77%

Jeriane then gives brief overview of the rest of the binder. We have received requests from the GA to show maps on how funds are being spent. Those have been created and added to the binder.

Frankie Babaian: Does "do not implement" mean these options were NOT recommended?
- Yes

Jessica Hill, Women's Safe House: Why no map of DV agencies?
– We attempted and it was almost impossible to create a map with all the DV agencies on it. If anyone has one, you are welcome to send it our way.

Laura Farmer, CASA SW: When will the document be posted? Thank you!
– We will post in the next few days.

Matthew Huffman, MOCADSV: Am I understanding that you are providing these 4 options to the General Assembly, and asking for them to make a decision, or will you make the decision with their input?
– We don't know yet. It will depend on the hearing on Tuesday.

Training Links from Patti:

https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/searchSubmit.cfm?search=Online%20Training&search_facets=%7B%22custom_fields.topic%22%3A%7B%7D%2C%22v%22%3A2%7D

https://www.ovcttac.gov/

Attendees:
Karie Roark - Missouri Alliance for Children and families
Cynthia Bennett w/JADASA
Matthew Huffman, MOCADSV
Karen Kirk, Lydia's House
Loretta Schouten, Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition
Joann Harbor House
Natalie Smith, MOCADSV
Karrie Flowers-Safe Connections
Shannon Unnerstall, Legal Services of Eastern MO
Rebecca Griffith- Russell House
Melissa Platt, Missouri Alliance for Children and Familes
Paula Richard, MOCADSV
Angie Blumel, CASA she/her
Cheryl Robb-Welch, MOCADSV
Connie Pendergrass, 37th CASA
Sharon Hileman, CASA of Southeast MO
Anne Crites, The Victim Center
Alisa White@Survival Adult Abuse Center, Inc.
Kathleen Tofall, Missouri Office of Prosecution Services/MAPA
Brandi Bair, Hope House
Lisa Fleming, Rose Brooks Center
Christine Thompson Grain Valley Police
Jessica Hill, Safe House of Southeast Missouri, Cape Girardeau
Courtney Davis, I Pour Life
Emily Macdonald, Regional Family Crisis Center
Dan Warren, Rose Brooks Center
Heather Lynn- Child Safe of Central Missouri
Erica Nanney, CARDV
Kelsey Conner, The Victim Center
Melissa Birdsell, Voices of Courage, St. Joseph
Katiina Dull, Child Advocacy Center, Inc.
Alana Hickman, Missouri CASA Association
Marsha Keene, Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center, Inc.

Wende Ochoa-Turning Point Advocacy Services
Laura Halfmann-Morris, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
Josh King, MOCSA - Metropolitan Organziation to Counter Sexual Assault
Laura Farmer, CASA of Southwest Missouri
Jenny Shaver, Child Safe of Central Missouri Inc
Julie West, Cass County Prosecutor's Office
Wendy Logan - DeafLEAD
Jenn Vorachack, FamilyForward
Kelly Hill, Heart of Missouri CASA
Kelli Neel, Christos House, Inc.
Gina Clement, Capital City CASA
Tim Stillings MOCADSV
Erin Swafford, Synergy Services
Wendy Harris, Compass Health ASP & CAC
Lori Haney - Citizens Against Spouse Abuse, Inc.
Eddie Ross Sr./Diamond Diva Empowerment Foundation
Taryn Waters, Synergy Services
Jenny - Saint Martha's
Stephanie Logan - DeafLEAD
Jennifer Howard, CASA of STL
Jennifer Phillips St. Charles County Juvenile Office
Justin Horton-Cornerstones of Care
Kimberly Kemerer, Children's Advocacy Center of East Central Missouri | Compass Health Network
Lori Ross, FosterAdopt Connect
Frankie Babaian, CASA of St Louis
Delta Area Economic Opportunity Corporation - DAEOC
Matt Stewart--Children's Center of SWMO
Phyllis Miller, YWCA Metro St. Louis
Kirsten Dunham, Mid-Missouri Legal Services
Melinda Ingram, Lakes Area Child Advocacy Center, Branson West
JoAnna Watts, CASA of the Parkland
Danielle Brown-YWCA St Joseph
Janelle Anderson, Green Hills Women's Shelter
Kelly Broeker - Preferred Family Healthcare
Kathryn Snow - newhouse
MaryAnne Metheny- Hope House
Sharon Alexander, Legal Services of Southern Missouri
Laura Cook, The Child Advocacy Center of Northeast Missouri
Laura Zahnd, MOCADSV
Sheree Keely, CADV
Bobby Morris-Culp, FosterAdopt Connect
Marla Svoboda Rose Brooks Center
Eric Keith - Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
Amy Couture, Rose Brooks Center
Marissa Morey - Reynolds County Crime Victim Advocate Program
Katie Dalton, Crime Victim Center
Amanda Jackson, CAPA
Tyler Bernsen - Child Advocacy Services of Greater St. Louis

Colleen Daum, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
Nickie Steinhoff, CASA St. Louis
Cara Gerdiman, Kids' Harbor, Inc.
Betsy Barnes Mid-Missouri Legal Services
Tressa Price - Agape House
Donna Franz Selah Place of Oregon County
Lauren Frosch, Turning Point Advocacy Services
Ashley Freivogel, Hope House
Bran-Dee Jelks- Diamond Diva Empowerment
Cara Jones, MOCADSV
Kathy Yohe, ACCIS
Judith Kile from COPE
Gail Dickson,ARCHS
Debi Koelkebeck, Jasper County CASA
Ursula Rowan St.Louis Circuit Attorney's Office -Victim Services Unit
Tammy Flippen CoxHealth Springfield MO