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Victim Perspective on Data Practices

Representatives from the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) gave Advisory Group members an overview of some of the challenges crime victims face related to data practices. The presenters aimed to help Advisory Group members understand why clearly communicated and followed data practices processes are important and how frustrating it can be for crime victims when they’re not.

The OJP operates a helpline that receives about 1,600 calls per year—one-third victims, and the remainder from the criminal justice community—with questions about data practices and victim rights. Common problems when victims seek additional information include:

- Asking the wrong people at agencies.
- Not being told when they can receive information on cases or case files.
- Fees associated with data requests.
- Confusion regarding case status (open versus inactive).

The OJP regularly consults with criminal justice agencies about data laws regarding crime victims. The OJP also provides grants to nearly all domestic violence/sexual assault programs in Minnesota. Victim advocacy programs that receive OJP funding—that includes nearly all domestic violence/sexual assault programs in the state—must follow Minnesota data practices laws on the protection and release of data.

Thanks to Safia Khan for her service to the Advisory Group

Safia Khan, who has served on the Advisory Group since February 2014 as a public member representing victim interests, has announced that she has left the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) for the Department of Corrections (DOC) and is resigning from the Advisory Group.

Khan was appointed Government Relations Director for DOC.

The Advisory Group thanks Khan for her service as a member and wish her success in her new position!

Next Advisory Group Meeting:

Friday, May 10, 2019
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
Room W249

Note: The information in this publication is an unofficial summary of activity. It should not be considered official meeting minutes or an official program status report. Information subject to change.

Data & Identification Standards Subcommittee Update

*Questioned Identity*

The Advisory Group continued its discussion about the challenges faced by the approximately 4,700 people in Minnesota with questioned identity. The subcommittee determined that although additional fingerprinting or biometric solutions would help prevent the problem, privacy concerns and mistrust of law enforcement prevent those steps at this point.

The Advisory Group discussed the benefit of having a questioned identity victim talk about the challenges it presents for them. The group also discussed whether it would be beneficial to try to understand demographics or patterns among victims.

*Members Needed*

The Data & Identification Standards Subcommittee has two requests for the Advisory Group:

- They need additional members.
- They need strategic direction.

The subcommittee is looking to add subject-matter experts in areas that aren’t represented by the current makeup of the subcommittee including a community/victim advocate. The subcommittee also needs a new chair following Oded Gallili’s retirement.

Subcommittee members need not be members of the Advisory Group (other than the chair).

The subcommittee currently has four members:
- Paula Lang
- Jeff McCormick
- Mark Ostrem
- Steve Washburn

Please reach out to a member of the subcommittee if you’d like to join or know someone who may be interested.

Collaborative Relationships & Funding Subcommittee Update

The Collaborative Relationships & Funding Subcommittee announced that Shana Conklin will be a new co-chair going forward, serving alongside Paul Beaumaster. As with the other subcommittees, there is a call for new membership. The subcommittee recommended including a brainstorming session at the next Advisory Group meeting on how to develop collaborative relationships.

Advisory Group membership and vacancies

While several Advisory Group positions remain open, one new member has been named. Representative Ruth Richardson has been appointed to the Advisory Group to fill the spot that had been held by Rep. Brian Johnson.

You can see other open Advisory Group positions on the [Advisory Group Website](#).

Data Practices Subcommittee Update

Along with the other subcommittees, the Data Practices Subcommittee issued a call for additional members.

The subcommittee is seeking input from the four ethnic councils in Minnesota—the Chicano Latino Affairs Council, the Council on Black Minnesotans, the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council—to make a presentation and possibly gather data on expectations of privacy.

Please contact subcommittee chair Laurie Beyer-Kropuenske if you have a suggestion for another organization to include.

Interested in joining a subcommittee?

Contact the chair of the subcommittee to inquire about joining, or send an email to bcaadvisorygroupsupport@state.mn.us.

Ideas or suggestions for next meeting’s agenda?

Contact Dana Gotz at dana.gotz@state.mn.us.