

CRIME VICTIM SERVICES COMMISSION

Meeting – November 18, 2024

MINUTES

****APPROVED****

Members Present:

Cpl. Robin Hornbuckle, Chairperson

Thomas Clement

Karen Gray Sheffield

Dr. Tolulope Sonuyi

Members Absent with Notice:

Jeff Getting

Staff Present:

Angela Povilaitis, Staff Attorney

Gail Krieger, Director of Operations

Jess Averill, Policy Analyst

Shalonna Banks, State Administrative Manager

Rob Spada, Staff Attorney

Lynelle Morgan, Staff Attorney

Katherine Bennett, Assistant Attorney General (Remote)

Alicia VanEyck, Compensation Claims Analyst (Remote)

Raven Douthard, Compensation Claims Analyst (Remote)

Alexandra Engen, Compensation Claims Analyst

Nicole Quinn, SAFE Claims Analyst (Remote)

Kelsie Halsted, General Office Assistant

Kaylin Winchester, Compensation Navigator (Remote)

Mary Selby, Compensation Navigator (Remote)

Sasha Kemp, Compensation Navigator (Remote)

Welcome and Introductions

Cpl. Robin Hornbuckle, Chairperson, called the Crime Victim Services Commission meeting to order at officially at 12:51 p.m. on November 18, 2024, in the Dempsey Room at the Grand Tower Building, 235 S. Grand Avenue, Lansing, MI 48933.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Mr. Clement made a motion, supported by Ms. Gray Sheffield to approve the November 18, 2024, meeting agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of the Open Meeting Notes

Ms. Gray Sheffield to a motion, supported by Mr. Clement to approve the May 20, 2024, open meeting minutes as written. Motion carried.

Chair Report

Recognition of staff for everything they do and acknowledged the change in staffing within the Crime Victim Compensation Program.

Staff Report

Ms. Banks updated the Commission on the highlights of the Compensation Program, a year into the enhancements becoming effective.

There has been a large increase (approximately 45%) of applications being submitted to the Crime Victim Compensation Program. Compensation staff have been busy updating communities of the expansion to the program and offering training to assist claimants filing applications. An increase in staff has become necessary to process these applications and meet victim/claimant needs.

Of the new benefits, relocation services, residential security, and bereavement have been awarded the most. These benefits have long been a need to victims, and we are glad we can now allow reimbursement.

Ms. Banks explained the steps being taken to assist with applications being reviewed properly and in a timely manner. Modifications have been made in the program's process for mass violence response. Compensation staff will immediately reach out to the community of the incident, make contact with the community agencies and victim advocates to let them know about what the Compensation program can offer, and that there has been a condensed application created for the victims of the incident.

There have been behavioral denials (misconduct and non-cooperation) modifications made through internal processes. Now once an analyst has reviewed a claim and there is a behavioral denial identified, it will be sent to the program manager to be reviewed and then sent to the staff attorney assigned to the compensation team and the director of crime victim compensation and victim's rights for final review. This multi-step process ensures that multiple people have reviewed the claim and that an accurate denial is made based on statute. This process has drastically reduced claims identified with behavioral denials.

Beginning this October, the Navigator Program has been revamped and expanded. The state has been broken up into regions, each assigned a navigator to serve victims in that area. Previously, this program was based in prosecutor offices, only covering select counties, but now this program is based within the Division of Victim Services and aids the entire state. The navigators

work in tangent with the Compensation Program and the Victim Rights Program to provide victims assistance, removing barriers, and making the program more accessible. Within one month, we have seen an increase in claims, training, and outreach.

Administrative Rule and Internal Policy Discussion

Mr. Spada presented the draft administrative rules, which include technical changes made to the General Rules to align with the August 12, 2023, statutory changes to the Crime Victim Compensation Board Act of 223 of 1976, and previous new and amended rules the Commission had already reviewed. The process was also explained that after the Commission reviews and approve this draft, share it with stakeholders, bring it back to the Commission for final approval (if necessary), then it will go through the legislative process.

Motion: Ms. Gray-Sheffield made a motion, supported by Dr. Sonuyi to proceed with the rule making process based on the proposed draft to the Crime Victim Services Commission General Rules and stakeholder review of proposed language, and to delegate authority to Commission staff to make any of the required modifications to those Rules as required during the Administrative Rulemaking process. Further, move to adopt the proposed language as internal policy until the rule process is concluded.

Legislative Review

Ms. Povilaitis discussed HB 6013 which amends the crime victim compensation statute to authorize the reimbursement of pet related expenses, including for “a pet deposit or other pet-related rental costs” and “temporary boarding of a pet that belongs to the victim, if the temporary boarding is necessary to facilitate the victim’s immediate relocation.”

Under Section 11(2)(c)(i): “a pet deposit or other pet-rental cost” would be added to the list of allowable relocation expenses, which already includes the first month of rent, a security deposit, and costs to start utilities in the relocation dwelling.

Under Section 11(2)(l): a new section would be created that reads “temporary boarding of a pet that belongs to the victim, if the temporary boarding is necessary to facilitate the victim’s immediate relocation.”

Current Crime Victim Compensation program practice is to support survivors who are pet owners and need relocation assistance by allowing for a pet deposit or other pet-related rental costs as part of the relocation award. In order to provide for a pet’s temporary boarding, it would have to be added into statute, to which Commission staff support.

Commissioners discussed that it would be important to establish a cap for this reimbursement, one that would fully cover the cost of this temporary service. Staff proposed \$1,000 cap, based on average boarding time and fees. The Commission wished to increase that proposal.

Motion: Ms. Gray Sheffield made a motion, supported by Mr. Clement, to opposed HB 6013 but would move to support if the following change is made.

- **Replace current Sec 11 (2) (l) with: “Reasonable expenses of not more than \$2,500 for temporary boarding of a pet or pets that belongs to the victim, if the**

temporary boarding is necessary to facilitate the victim's immediate relocation. An award for this expense may not exceed \$2,500 per claimant listed in section 4(1)(a). Motion carried.

Ms. Averill discussed HB 4605 and 4606 explaining how they would create the Public Safety and Violence Prevention Fund and generate revenue of an anticipated \$106.7 million in fiscal year 2023-2024 and \$107.7 million in fiscal year 2024-2025 with the amounts increasing in future years. Of most importance to the Commission, the bill would allocate 2.0% to Crime Victim's Rights Fund; based on the May 2024 consensus estimates, these distributions would total \$2.1 million in fiscal year 2023-2024 and \$2.2 million in fiscal year 2024-2025.

Motion: Ms. Gray Sheffield made a motion, supported by Dr. Sonuyi, to express that the Commission appreciates the acknowledgement of the needs of victims and survivors from crime and community violence, and supports funding being directed to the Crime Victims Fund. Motion carried.

Staff Report (cont.)

Mr. Spada provided an update on Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) claims for the mass violence events at Oxford High School, Michigan State University, and the Splash Pad in Rochester Hills.

Staff expounded on other mass violence claims such as the violent event at the Block Party in Detroit and how it did not fit the criteria of the Anti-Terrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP), leaving little assistance for the victims of that crime.

The Commission decided to write a letter to the Federal Office for Victims of Crime to affirm their commitment to addressing the inequities in the distribution of the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) AEAP funding, particularly as it pertains to mass violence in underserved communities. The Commission respectfully request that OVC revisit its AEAP guidelines to ensure fairness, equity, and consistency in the allocation of these critical resources to communities affected by mass violence.

Motion: Cpl. Hornbuckle proposed a motion, supported by Ms. Gray Sheffield to write a letter to the Office for Victims of Crime addressing concerns of inequities in the distribution of AEAP funds. Motion carried.

Ms. Krieger gave a funding update. She explained that federal funding is the lowest it has been in 10 years. This is more concerning with the increase in claims to the compensation program.

The compensation team is working internally to figure out a process to close the gap of the court ordered and collected restitution/fines and fees owed to the Crime Victim Rights Fund to successfully get to the Fund. We are working internally with the Department of Treasury (who administers the CVRF) to put a process in place to do better reconciliation for "bounced" checks from the county courts. There hasn't been follow-up in the past on recovering these funds for checks have not cleared the system. Staff have sent a letter to SCAO requesting assistance, but

assistance hasn't been offered. Staff will continue to find a solution for this issue, with the help of AAG Bennett.

Adjournment

Motion from Ms. Gray Sheffield and seconded by Dr. Sonuyi to adjourn the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsie Halsted