

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
3101 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA

School Safety and Security Committee Meeting

August 31, 2022

MINUTES

Members/Designees: Mr. Derin Myers, Designee for Chairman Ramsey
Ms. Janice Bart, Member
Senator James Brewster, Member
Representative Donna Bullock, Member
Ms. Nikki Bricker Cameron, Member
Col. Robert Evanchick, Member
Ms. Tanoa Fagan, Designee for Acting Secretary Snead
Dr. Benjamin Feeney, Member
Representative Barbara Gleim, Member
Mr. Mike Hurley, Member
Dr. Scott Kuren, Designee for Secretary Hagarty
Mr. Randy Padfield, Member
Dr. Jamie Piraino, Member
Dr. Kathleen Reeves, Member
Mr. Joseph Regan, Member
Ms. Wendy Robison, Member
Dr. Helena Tuleya-Payne, Member
Mr. Mike Vereb, Designee for Attorney General Shapiro

Staff:

Sally Barry	Samantha Koch
Pamela Bennett	Carol Kuntz
Lindsay Busko	Crystal Lauver
Christina Cosgrove-Rooks	Diane Morgan
Chris Epoca	Mike Pennington
Lynn Fidler	Debra Sandifer
Charles Gartside	Alyssa Subsinsky
Heather Hewitt	Lindsay Vaughan
Rebecca Kiehl	Shaun White

Guests: Hannah Barrick, PA Assn. of School Business Officials (PASBO)
Jonathan Berger, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Bill (unknown guest)
Sean Brandon, PA House
Erika Brunelle, PA State Education Association (PSEA)
Richard Carpenter, Information Network Associates (INA)
Mike Deery, PA Senate
Jacob Derrick, Governor's Office
Wendy Frible, Pocono Mountain School District
Lily Guthrie, PA House
Lori (unknown guest)
Westburn Majors, PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Heather Masshardt, PA School Board Association (PSBA)
Maj. Jeremy Richard, PA State Police (PSP)
John Sancenito, Information Network Associates (INA)
Christine Seitz, PA House
Stephen St. Vincent, PA Office of Attorney General
Vicki Wilken, PA Senate

- **Call to Order of the August 31, 2022 Meeting and Adoption of Minutes**

Mr. Myers called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM and welcomed participants. A quorum of members was established. Mr. Myers noted that the minutes from the July 27, 2022 meeting were part of the packet of materials made available prior to today's meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2022 meeting as submitted

Motion: Vereb. **Seconded:** Piraino. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Gleim. **Aye Votes:** 16, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

- **Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grant Program**

Mr. Myers noted the VIP Solicitation Framework document provided in advance with the meeting materials that was developed by the reconvened VIP workgroup. He invited Ms. Samantha Koch to present an overview of the framework to the Committee.

Ms. Koch shared a PowerPoint presentation covering key highlights of the solicitation framework and lessons learned over the past year. Ms. Koch stated that the overarching goal is to invest in the launch, expansion, or continuation of effective, evidence-informed community violence intervention initiatives (CVI) through local projects as well as statewide training, technical assistance, and evaluation supports. With this in mind, the VIP Workgroup reached consensus on this framework that would carve the \$105M in VIP funds into three "buckets":

- Recognizing the significant increase in funding and responsibilities and commensurate need for increases in technical assistance, training supports and oversight, the first "bucket" would carve out \$4.5M to augment the existing awarded VIP Technical Assistant Project with WestEd and LISC, provide for new data and research evaluation activities, and enhance general administrative oversight to strengthen the program's internal staffing supports.
- Following a review of last year's solicitation in terms of numbers and amount requested, the Framework proposes a second "bucket" of \$85.5M to support similar projects, with some tweaks to make sure that very tiny and fledgling organizations are not overlooked and some adjustments to the approach of considering applications involving fiscal sponsors or "umbrella" agencies.
- A third new "bucket" of \$15M for coordinated strategy pilots to help spur and advance collaborative efforts among relevant players involved in community violence interventions

Regarding the \$85.5M for VIP competitive grants, Ms. Koch clarified that community-based organizations must be a registered 501(c)(3) in order to make direct application for funds or use a fiscal sponsor who is eligible to make direct application if not. An [Applicant Readiness Checklist](#) will help entities navigate the eligibility considerations and prepare for the application and grants process.

Ms. Koch noted that projects will be for up to 29 months, a bit longer timeframe than last year's 24 months. Additionally, while maximum award amounts will be based on applicants' budgets, there is now a cap so applicants cannot request more than 50% of their current budget. The solicitation includes a table that spells out different categories gives some examples of maximum awards, which would range between \$25K to \$2.5M. Ms. Koch noted that since VIP funding includes federal dollars, PCCD is unable to prescribe a specific cap on indirect costs (last year it was 10%), but will stress that indirect/administrative costs should be kept to a minimum.

Ms. Koch shared a slight modification to the application process itself, that while SurveyMonkey will again be utilized for the initial funding request, the submitted forms will be reviewed as part of a "Tier 1" process to identify applicants who would be invited to submit a formal application in PCCD's Egrants System before a final recommendation would be made to the Committee.

She also noted that the types of eligible activities are the same as last year's solicitation, with a few new or modified areas, which she reviewed.

Ms. Koch provided details on the new proposal to utilize \$15M million in VIP funds to support a new Coordinated Community Violence Intervention Strategies Pilot Grant Program. The funds would provide intensive investments and supports for collaborative community violence prevention and response strategies within specified contiguous service areas. Ms. Koch said that they envision supporting five to eight pilot projects over a 32-month period and reviewed key project activities intended to increase coordination and linkages among community stakeholders.

Ms. Koch compared the new \$15M pilot strategy with the \$85.5M VIP competitive grants in a chart, which is posted on the PCCD website with other information on the [2022-23 VIP Grant Program](#). The chart shows the similarities and differences around project scope, geography, partnerships, key activities, sustainability, and project period. Finally, Ms. Koch reviewed the anticipated application, review, and recommendation timeline of activities, which spans from early September 2022 through mid-January 2023. At the conclusion of her presentation, Mr. Myers called for a motion.

Motion to approve the VIP Solicitation framework

Motion: Brewster. **Seconded:** Tuleya-Payne. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Bricker. **Public Voice:** None. **Aye Votes:** 16, **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**

- **Update on FY 22-23 School Mental Health & Safety and Security Grants**

Mr. Myers informed Committee members that as of noon, 762 of the 784 eligible school entities started their applications in PCCD's Egrants system, with 531 being submitted thus far. Only three districts, a few career and technical centers, and some charter and cyber charter schools have not yet begun their application.

Mr. Myers noted that, as anticipated with how different this year's grant program is from previous years, a number of questions have been submitted throughout the application period. He shared the two main questions that emerged and PCCD staff response to them. The first commonly asked question was around extending the application period. Mr. Myers stated that while the application period ends today, staff will work with school entities past the due date to finalize any outstanding issues as long as they have a draft application in the system. Mr. Myers said that while it was a challenge, schools have done a good job of getting their applications submitted.

For school entities that did not begin and/or submit their applications, Mr. Myers affirmed that PCCD staff will be reaching out to them over the next month or so to find out the reason and ask if they are interested in moving forward to obtain the funding. Two Committee members commented on some of the challenges, including numerous administration changes and staff turnover, difficulties with getting bus drivers, and obtaining required board approval or verification as part of the process with such a short timeframe.

Mr. Myers shared that the second big question was whether the school entity had to meet all of the Tier 1 Baseline Criteria before expending funding on other eligible activities. While that is correct per Act 55, school entities were allowed to provide explanations or elaborate on justifications regarding any of the tiered sections for staff review as part of the application.

Mr. Myers noted that the application process seemed to run smoothly, and schools seemed to start their applications much earlier rather than waiting until the final day to submit. He expressed appreciation to partners on the Committee and the various associations for their collaboration in getting the word out to all the school entities.

Mr. Myers apprised Committee members on the status of the grant review process, stating that preliminary review indicates that most of the issues relate to satisfying the Tier 1 standards. He noted that while some issues, such as physical requirements for cyber schools, are relatively straight forward, other areas are more complex. The latter issues often involve the affordability or long-term costs of implementation, such as the sustainability of new mental health positions, or whether it makes sense based on the completed physical or behavioral health assessment. Mr. Myers said that there have also been cases of schools asking for Tier 1 items out of priority as well as potential supplantation issues.

Mr. Myers stated that staff will continue to review applications, seek to understand schools' positions related to satisfying Tier 1 criteria, and present any unresolved questions at the September meeting. He observed that this process is also collecting good feedback for future potential revisions to the Baseline Criteria. A member concurred, noting the value of this information in identifying possible issues and barriers especially if it's frequently around a particular criterion. She added that it's an important systematic way to look at schools to ensure that the beginning steps are there before going on to something more.

Mr. Myers concluded by reminding Committee members that a more thorough review and explanation of the grant applications may go into more specific details for schools; therefore they will be addressed in Executive Session at the September meeting, along with the Mental Health Survey results, in the interest of protecting the safety of both schools and students.

- **Update on Staff Training and Coordinator Training Workgroup Progress**

Mr. Myers invited Ms. Lindsay Vaughan to share an update regarding efforts of the Staff Training and Coordinator Training Workgroups. Ms. Vaughan informed members that significant progress has been made on the standards and thanked the members of both workgroups for their participation in this process. She said that each group has convened twice, and additional updates have been made since the materials were shared with the Committee.

Ms. Vaughan reviewed the structure of the two documents and what they are meant to accomplish, noting that they are for two different audiences. She explained that the draft Employee Training Standards document is for curriculum developers and contains all the elements needed, emphasizing that its guidance is for baseline trainings. The workgroup understands that it's important for schools to be able to review their own policies and procedures, so the standards provided additional resources for each topic for those who might want to go deeper. She added that they have started filtering through some of the resources to identify the ones that are best for developers versus attendees.

Ms. Vaughan stated that the draft Coordinator Training Criteria is similarly structured. They are developing 11 topics focused on all the elements to be provided for the coordinator role. Like the Standards, the Coordinator Training Criteria is designed to provide additional resources for coordinators.

Ms. Vaughan said that it feels like the documents are about 90% done, after which the workgroups will look at implementation. A member noted that it would be important to collect data on exactly who is being trained (school role) so there's a knowledge of what their background is. Ms. Vaughan stated this information has been collected and they are pulling it together in the hopes of having it available by the end of the next report period. They also included some language regarding background knowledge that trainers need to meet participants where they are.

Ms. Vaughan stated that they are moving beyond developing the standards and are looking at moving the ball forward with implementation, beginning with a competitive funding announcement solicitation for curriculum developers. They plan to gather information from the field as to what is the most valuable and useful so can include that in the funding

announcement. She will provide an update on the implementation plans at the next Committee meeting.

- **Member Updates/Comments/Questions**

Mr. Myers noted that the general updates document and the 2022 Suicide Prevention Guide resource, developed through a joint assortment of state and local stakeholders, were provided in the meeting materials. He invited members to share any comments, questions or updates, but other than a question regarding a contact for the Suicide Prevention Guide, none were offered.

- **Public Comment**

Mr. Myers invited any public comment however none was received.

- **Adjournment 1:56**

Mr. Myers commented on the staff team working through this funding, noting that there are several other huge initiatives occurring at PCCD at the same time. He expressed appreciation for all of the staff effort in reviewing applications and moving things forward.

Mr. Myers thanked members for their participation in the meeting. He noted that the next meeting is slated for September 28 at which time the Committee will need to take formal action on the training standards and criteria. He also anticipated that an Executive Session will be convened to discuss preliminary findings from the Mental Health Survey and review the grant applications. Following the vote, the meeting adjourned at 1:56 PM.

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Bullock. **Seconded:** Tuleya-Payne. **Abstentions:** None. **Not Present for Vote:** Bricker & Vereb. **Aye Votes:** 15; **Nay Votes:** 0. **Motion Adopted**