

Victim Access Workgroup Agenda

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

8:00-9:00am

Fairfax County Courthouse, Room 201.1

Members Present: Nora Mahoney (co-chair), Hon. Jonathan Frieden, Bolivia Bustamante, Renee Carroll-Grate, Fazia Deen, Susan Madsen, Pam Sejas, Stephanie Romonchuk, and Brittany Vera.

Members of the Public: none

Members Absent: Hon. Susan Stoney, Ayaan Ali, Sandra Guerrero-Perez, Angela Yeboah, Tina Spurlock,

I. Welcome

Nora opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

II. Protective Order Process: Content Review

a. PO Extension

Participants reviewed and discussed the process of extending the protective order and the circumstances under which this takes place. Judge Frieden shared there is a process that is being revised, but it is not final yet.

Nora shared that LSNV is getting a lot of requests for consultations about PO extensions, but Judge Frieden shared is that he has not seen the same number of petitions coming to his courtroom.

Judge Frieden shared that the chief judge is meeting with clerks and court staff to determine next steps in what may be a new process.

There are two reasons to file an extension: there has been a new incident of violence or contact or there is an ongoing concern for safety where the victim is still afraid.

Judge Frieden reported they are seeing almost 15 PPOs a day that require the use of other dockets to accommodate them all.

The group discussed various scenarios where the extension of the PO may be necessary.

III. Next Steps

The group discussed next steps to have individuals review the parts of the protective order process. The group discussed having both victims who are in a place where they would not be triggered by reviewing the material. The group also discussed having non-survivors review the documents who are not associated with the legal system. Pam Sejas shared George Mason Early Identification Program who has contact with advanced middle and high school students who might be able to review.

Having those who speak major languages (Spanish and Arabic) would also be helpful to review to ensure that the way the document is worded in English will be easily translated in Spanish. Bolivia has access to individuals who speak Spanish and Fazia has a group that speaks Arabic.

The group decided on phased approach to review so that people get the process in batches and multiple are not changed simultaneously. Nora shared that she had a group of interns to have them review right away.

Brittany stated that the public information officer was finishing reviewing the content to ensure it was edited and at a lower reading level before sending it out to the community for review. The outside reviewers will review for clarity of processes and words they do not understand.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned without further discussion.

Next meeting:

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

8:00 am

Fairfax County Courthouse, Room 201.1