



SOUTH CAROLINA Victim Service Coordinating Council

Debbie Curtis - Chair
SC Department of Probation,
Parole and Pardon Services

David Ross - Vice-Chair
SC Commission on
Prosecution Coordination

Barbara Jean (B.J.) Nelson
SC Department of Public Safety

Barbara Grissom,
SC Department of Corrections

Jarrad Bruder
SC Sheriffs' Association

Shannon Geary
SC Victim Assistance Network

Dean Kilpatrick, Ph.D.
Medical University of SC

Veronica Swain Kunz
Governor's Crime Victims'
Ombudsman Office

Telicia Dauway
SC Department of Juvenile Justice

Kim Hamm
SC Network of Children's
Advocacy Centers

Larry Barker, Ph.D.
State Office of Victim Assistance

Bridget Musteala
SC Law Enforcement
Victim Advocate Association

Mark Fallaw
SC Police Chiefs' Association

Marvin Bryant Sr.
Parents of Murdered Children
- SC Chapter

Nancy Barton
Sistercare

Nataki Brown
SC Solicitors' Advocate Forum

Sara Barber
SC Coalition Against Domestic
Violence and Sexual Assault

Trisha Allen
SC Attorney General's Office

Shane Kitchen
SC Jail Administrator's
Association

Thomas Lucas
Crime Victim Representative

September 24, 2015

Sheriff J. Al Cannon, Jr.
Chairman
South Carolina Public Safety Coordinating Council
3691 Leeds Avenue
N. Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Public Safety Coordinating Council:

Please allow this letter to serve as a request from the South Carolina Victim Services Coordinating Council (VSCC) to the South Carolina Public Safety Coordinating Council regarding the VOCA FFY 2015 special solicitation due October 16, 2015. We have grave concerns that the special solicitation is only open to fund Law Enforcement Victim Advocates, Solicitor's Office-based Victim Advocates, and for one-time equipment-only projects and vehicles.

The VSCC is comprised of twenty-two Directors/Administrators who represent a broad range of victim service providers and key stakeholders representing the VOCA statutory priorities of child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence. Pursuant to SC Code, the VSCC is mandated *"to improve coordination efforts, suggest policy and procedural improvements to those agencies and groups as needed and recommend needed statutory changes to the General Assembly."*

On September 3, 2015 the VSCC discussed concerns regarding the narrow focus of the special solicitation and the need to expand it to all victim service providers. Law Enforcement and Solicitor based advocates are generally not qualified to provide the various long-term needs of victims; i.e., therapeutic care, trauma counseling, etc., which is essential to assist victims whose needs surpass those provided by the criminal justice system.

The funds are administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime (OVC). Guidelines promulgated by OVC are as follows: *"OVC expects that VOCA administrators [SCDPS] will meet with key stakeholder coalitions and groups, including those that represent the VOCA statutory priorities, domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse prevention, to conduct strategic planning for funding new programs and services, and enhancing existing initiatives."* This has not been done.



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South Carolina ranks first in the nation for the rate of women killed by men. Domestic violence is at the forefront of the State's attention as evidenced by initiatives from the legislature and Governor Haley. The VSCC believes it is imperative to include domestic violence, child advocacy, and sexual assault programs in the special solicitation due October 16, 2015 for VOCA funding.

We request that the Public Safety Coordinating Council open the VOCA solicitation to all eligible government agencies and non-profit organizations that provide direct victim services. We would be pleased to provide additional information or meet with the Public Safety Coordinating Council to help develop a strategy for use of the increased VOCA funds in order to impact the greatest number of crime victims.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Debbie Curtis, Chair
Victim Services Coordinating Council

cc: Governor Nikki R. Haley
SC Public Safety Coordinating Council Members