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Pathways Towards Equity in Grants Administration

2023 VOCA National Joint Training Conference




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Introductions



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Overview

- Introductions
- Background on CJP
- Local & State Connections
- Expansion of Project to VOCA Case Study States
- Panel Discussion
- Questions

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Learning Objectives

- Understand tangible ways an SAA can implement policies and funding practices that advance equity and increase access to victim services.
- Learn strategies to prioritize funding to populations historically impacted by inequity.
- Discover ways states have reduced compliance barriers for culturally specific programs and for "by and for" organizations.


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Equity Program Background



Heather Warnken is executive director of the Center for Criminal Justice Reform at the University of Baltimore School of Law, where she works on numerous initiatives and reform efforts spanning victim services, community-based public safety, policing, decarceration, equitable grantmaking and more. Prior to coming to the University of Baltimore, she served as visiting fellow at the US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, co-affiliated with the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the Office for Victims of Crime in the first-ever position dedicated to bridging the gap between research, policy and practice to improve the response to individuals and communities impacted by crime victimization. Prior to DOJ, Warnken served as legal policy associate at the Warren Institute on Law & Social Policy at University of California, Berkeley School of Law, which included leading two statewide needs assessments on how to improve access to services and compensation for underserved crime victims.

Heather Warnken, J.D., LL.M
Equity Consultant, NCJA
Executive Director
Center for Criminal Justice Reform,
University of Baltimore,
School of Law

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Equity in Grants Administration and Strategic Planning Program: Phase 1 - focused on Byrne JAG

- In-depth interviews with SAAs
- Equity Working Group: Local-State connections
- Document reviews
- Literature Review
- Case studies

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About the Case Studies

- Designed to examine how an SAA's existing processes incorporate equity, in order to
 - offer recommendations for enhancing equity through changes in substance and process;
 - lift up promising practices and other beneficial information that may be built upon, formalized, and/or shared with other similarly situated jurisdictions.

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Equity Across a Continuum in Grants Administration: Promising and Emerging Practices for Ensuring Equity in Grants Administration and Strategic Planning

- Report released April 2023
- "SAAs - whose expansive roles include administering roughly \$3 billion in federal criminal justice funding annually - can help shape these efforts in both the what and the how of this spending."
- 8 Promising and Emerging Practices identified for the field

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Definition of Equity Across a Continuum

- "Equity is the intentional practice of change to actualize the fair treatment, advancement, access and opportunity for all to thrive."
- Equity Across a Continuum refers to the process of embedding equity in the grants administration process from initial concept to final grant reporting. Developing shared language and core practices are integral to ensuring equity is present at each stage.
- Importance of expanding equity lens through intersectionality: race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, economic status.

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Values to Guide the Continuum

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Promising and Emerging Practices

1. Building intentional relationships between SAAs and communities served
2. Advocating/ Implementing Equitable Reimbursement Models
3. Fostering Collaboration/ SAA-Driven Collaboration
4. Promoting Braided Funding

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Promising and Emerging Practices

5. Dedicating Staff to Drive Equity Priorities
6. Embedding Equity Policies within Solicitations
7. Prioritize Culturally and Socially Responsive TTA Led by Impacted Communities
8. Accessibility as a Result of COVID-19 pandemic

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Some Phase 1 Case Study Takeaways


- Current events and political context *matter*.
- Strides have been made in equity in victim services funding that others can and should learn from.
- Offering more meaningful capacity building through improved TTA for potential subrecipients: common as both a goal and *unmet need*.
- Widespread need to examine the diversity of Advisory Board membership and grant reviewers.
- The importance of SAA offices looking *inward*.

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Local & State Connections


Delrice Adams is a justice warrior with over 25 years of directing social service and public health reform efforts. Appointed by JB Pritzker in January 2020, Executive Director Adams leads ICJIA in spearheading and informing on public safety policies, research, and best practices. Equity, fairness, and opportunity are the priorities of every grant program and policy administered by ICJIA. Executive Director Adams leverages her expertise in criminal justice, violence prevention, and racial equity to advance the agency's work. A visionary leader trained in trauma-informed practices, Executive Director Adams' approach is grounded in her love for and strong ties with the community.



Delrice Adams
Executive Director
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority


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Expansion of Project to VOCA Case Study States


Janelle Melohn became the Director of the OVC Center for VOCA Administrators (VOCA Center) at the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) in August, 2021. Janelle provides leadership and vision for the Center, which serves as the national training and technical assistance provider for VOCA State Assistance & Compensation Administrators. Prior to this role, Janelle was the director of the Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD) in the Office of the Iowa Attorney General. Janelle spent fifteen years with the agency, (the last ten as director) overseeing a staff of 30 individuals, an annual budget of roughly \$45 million dollars and eight statewide programs aiding victims of crime. Janelle received her B.S. in Sociology from Iowa State and her Master of Public Administration from Drake University. In 2019, Janelle received the trailblazer award from the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault for her work to prioritize funding and services to open doors for historically marginalized communities.




Janelle Melohn
Director
VOCA Center

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Panel Discussion



Blake Kush, MSW
Training & Outreach Unit Chief
New York State Office of Victim Services




Linsey Wingfield
VOCA Assistance Administrator
Office for Victim Programs,
Colorado Department of Public Safety




Nick Gill
Justice Program Administrator
Kentucky Justice and Public Safety

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Questions



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