

**Sunset Advisory Commission**  
**Board and Commission Review of the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence**

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? **The Vermont Council on Domestic Violence (Council) meets quarterly, in March, June, September and December.**
2. Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years: **March 21, 2018, June 13, 2018, September 12, 2018, December 12, 2018**

**March 20, 2019, June 6, 2019, September 18, 2019, December 11, 2019**

**The Council cancelled it's March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting as a result of COVID 19 and met via Zoom on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

3. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found. **The Council agendas and minutes are circulated to a large email list, and are available by contacting Heather Holter at [vtdivcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:vtdivcouncil@gmail.com) or Kiona Heath at [kiona@vtnetwork.org](mailto:kiona@vtnetwork.org)The minutes and agendas are housed on a shared file at the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.**
4. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive. **No Council Members receive any per diem.**

**The first seven folks on the member list below are appointed by the Governor to two year terms. These members are often re-appointed for additional terms. The current Governor appointees' terms did technically end in July, but in my experience Governors tend to want to wait until after the election to handle any appointments, so I have just reached out to the Governor's office to request that terms be extended or reappointments made.**

**The second group of 8 members are appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and were made last year. Terms are typically two years appointment or reappointment.**

**The remaining Council members are designated by the Executive Director of their organization or the Agency head with no term limits.**

Membership Role	Current Member
Survivor <i>(Governor Appointed 2 year ends 7/31/20)</i>	Amy Messina
Same Sex Domestic Violence Service Provider <i>(Governor Appointed 2 year ends 7/31/20 )</i>	Skylar Wolf
Deaf and Disability Service Provider <i>(Governor Appointed 2 year ends 7/31/20)</i>	Keri Darling (Rebecca LaLanne)
Representative of the Department of State's Attorneys <i>(Governor Appointed 2 year ends 7/31/20)</i>	Sarah George, Esq.
Prosecutor from STOP Domestic Violence Unit <i>(Governor Appointed 2 year term)</i>	Vacant
Representative of the Vermont Faith Community <i>(Governor Appointed 2 year ends 7/31/20)</i>	Rev. Sarah Glassman
Representative of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence <i>(Governor Appointed 2 year ends 7/31/20)</i>	Susan Ide
Representative of the Family Court <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019)</i>	Hon. Alicia Humbert
District Judge <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019 )</i>	Hon. Thomas Devine
Assistant Judge <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019)</i>	Hon. Joel Page
Court Manager <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019)</i>	Anne Damone
Gardium at litem (GAL) <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019 )</i>	Betsy Gregory
Representative from VT Legal Aid <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019)</i>	Sarah Kagle, Esq.
Representative of the VT Family Bar <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019 )</i>	Michelle Donnelly, Esq.
Representative of the Court Administrators Office <i>(Appointed by Chief Justice 7/2019)</i>	Theresa Scott
Representative from the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence <i>(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)</i>	Karen Tronsgard-Scott
Executive Director of the Criminal Justice Training Council <i>(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)</i>	Designee; Jenn Firpo
Commissioner of the Department of Corrections or Designee <i>(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)</i>	Designee: Gary Marvel
Secretary of the Agency of Human Services or Designee <i>(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)</i>	Designee: Alison Harte
Attorney General or Designee <i>(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)</i>	<b>Council Co-Chair</b> Designee: Carolyn Hanson, Esq.
Representative of the VT Commission on Women <i>(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)</i>	Hannah Lane
Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families or Designee <i>(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)</i>	Designee: Julie Ryley

Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or Designee(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Designee: Det. Sgt. John MacCallum
Defender General or Designee(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Designee: Kerrie Johnson
Representative of the VT Sheriff's Association(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Sherriff W. Samuel Hill
Representative of the Coalition of Batterer Intervention Programs(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Melissa Deas
Representative of the VT Criminal Information Center(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Jeffrey Wallin
Representative of the VT Supervised Visitation Coalition(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Christina Grier
Representative of the VT Police Chief's Association(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Chief Robbie Blish
Commissioner of the Department of Education or Designee(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Designee: Alicia Hanrahan
Representative of the VT Center for Crime Victim Services(Agency/Organization Rep. no term)	Gene Nelson
Representative of the Addison County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Kerri Duquette-Hoffman
Representative of the Bennington County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Lauren Wilcox
Representative of the Caledonia- So. Essex Counties Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Amanda MacFarland
Representative of the Chittenden County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Anera Foco <b>Council Co-Chair</b>
Representative of the Franklin and Grand Isle Counties Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Kris Lukens
Representative of the Lamoille County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Becky Gonyea
Representative of the Orange County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Linda Ingold
Representative of the Orleans- N. Essex Counties Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Roxie Rivard
Representative of the Rutland County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Bianca Zanella
Representative of the Washington County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Diane Kinney
Representative of the Windham County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Donna Macomber
Representative of Windsor County Task Force(Task Force Rep. no term)	Abby Tassel

5. Provide an overview of the board or commission's purpose.

**The Vermont Council on Domestic Violence is charged with providing leadership for Vermont's statewide effort to eradicate domestic violence. The Council has the following duties laid out in statute:**

- **Facilitate opportunities for: dialogue, advocacy, education, and support among state agencies, advocacy groups, and the public.**
- **Collect, review, and analyze data and information relating to domestic violence.**
- **Provide assistance in developing effective responses to domestic violence, including model policies and procedures, prevention and education initiatives, and domestic-violence-related programs for the criminal justice and human services sectors;**
- **Specifically, the council shall work with the Department of State's Attorneys and the Department of Corrections to develop recommendations for practice in: evidence-based prosecution, risk assessment with domestic violence offenders, the use of deferred sentences in domestic violence cases, standardized probation conditions for domestic violence offenders, appropriate programming options for domestic violence offenders, and strategies for addressing victims of domestic violence who commit crimes as a result of the coercion of a batterer.**
- **Recommend changes in state programs, laws, administrative regulations, policies, and budgets related to domestic violence.**
- **Establish and maintain standards for intervention programs for perpetrators of domestic violence, and develop a process for certifying that programs are complying with the standards.**
- **Review and comment upon legislation relating to domestic violence introduced in the general assembly at the request of any member of the general assembly or on its own initiative; and**
- **Study the issue of employment discrimination against victims of domestic violence and suggest model workplace protections and policies.**
- **Collaborate with the Vermont Fatality Review commission to develop strategies for implementing the commission's recommendations.**

6. Is that purpose still needed? **Yes.**

**The Council is a central statewide entity making best practice recommendations based on current trends, available data, and changes in an evolving field.**

**The Council gathers information about challenges experienced by groups working on the local level to address domestic violence and makes recommendations to statewide entities as well as the Vermont Legislature.**

**The Council provides technical assistance to county task forces and connects them with statewide organizations, agencies and groups who provide a response to victims of domestic violence and those who use violence against intimate partners.**

**The Council provides infrastructure, technical assistance and certification for domestic violence accountability programs in each county.**

**The Council maintains access and connection to the Judiciary and creates a mechanism for information, problem-solving and feedback on operational and administrative issues. The Council works with the Judiciary to identify and develop strategies to attend to judicial education needs related to domestic violence.**

7. What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?

**The Council acts as a clearinghouse, hub, and connector for the work that goes on around the state related to domestic violence. Council meetings are well attended, as they are reliably a vehicle for education, technical assistance and crafting of recommendations related to statewide practice. The loss of the Council would leave county domestic and sexual violence task forces without a central body, and there would be no vehicle for coordinating and certifying domestic violence accountability programs.**

How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose?

**The Council executes its duties effectively, although we are forced to prioritize one or two duties at a time, since we are currently staffed with 20 hours a week of coordination and administration. However, this approach works well, as Council members participate in priority setting, and current staff rely on two co-chairs and committees to support the Council's success in performing its purpose and responsibilities.**

**The two staff sharing this position have been very stretched as a result of the loss of the Domestic Violence Accountability Coordinator position. Luckily, Justice Reinvestment Act funding will support the reinstatement of that staffing**

**Council committees include the Consultation/Legislative Committee, Domestic Violence Accountability Committee, Judicial Caucus, and Domestic Violence Task Force Committee. Committees meet on an as needed basis, between 2-4 times a year. The Council maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission.**

8. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner? **The Vermont Council on Domestic Violence was modeled after the Delaware Coordinating Council and many other state councils on domestic violence. The Vermont Council is not as resourced as the Delaware Council, and could certainly be more efficient and effective with a larger staff. The Council is designed to bring state government agencies, task forces, non-profit organizations and community task forces together in a unified response, so the purpose could not effectively be carried out by any one of those entities on their own.**

If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission’s functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? **No.** If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose? **N/A**

9. Does the board or commission’s enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission? **Yes.**

Provide a list of the board and commission’s last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?

Staffing/Expenditures	Funding Sources
\$17,384 Heather Holter	\$17640 DV/SV State Special funds
\$18,200 Kiona Heath \$35,584 TOTAL for Coordinator position	\$17640 Other state funds COMP
\$125 Travel \$40 office supplies	\$469 Private Fundraising
<b>\$35,749 GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$35,749 GRAND TOTAL</b>

The Governor’s Office also covers the cost of American Sign Language Interpretation for meetings which is approximately \$3500-\$4000 annually.

10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations? **No.**
11. How would you measure the performance of the board or commission?

**The Council sets goals and priorities and Council committees routinely report on their progress. Vermont’s Domestic Violence Accountability Programs are certified every two years, and the Statewide Standards for Domestic Violence Accountability programs are revised every five years. The Council often makes recommendations to the Vermont Legislature, Vermont Judiciary, and the Agency of Human Services.**