

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
CRIME VICTIMS REPARATION COMMISSION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR



FRANK ZUBIA
DIRECTOR

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
CRIME VICTIMS REPARATION COMMISSION-(NMCVRC)

April 24, 2025, Commission Meeting Minutes

6200 Uptown Blvd. NE Suite #210
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Meeting Called to Order

On April 24, 2025, Commission Chair Karst called the April meeting of the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission to order at 10:02 a.m.

Commission Chair Karst announced the names of the Commission members of the public body and acknowledged those who are participating in person and remotely.

The following Commission Members were present:

David Karst, Commission Chair (Virtual)
Sheriff Kim Stewart, Commission Member (Virtual)
Dr. Randall Brown, M.D., Commission Member (Virtual)

The following NMCVRC staff members were present:

Frank Zubia, Director
Cindy Mok, Chief Financial Officer
Donna Richmond, Grants Bureau Chief (Virtual)
Jacqueline Sanchez, Compensation Bureau Chief
Debra Yepa, State Investigator
Leslie Valenzuela, State Investigator (Virtual)
Kristin Wood-Hegner, VAWA Grant Administrator
Anna Quintana, Compensation Management Analyst
Kristina Escamilla, Administrative Secretary
Rebecca Guay, Deputy Director of Government Counsel & Accountability
Scott Sanchez, LFC Budget Analyst

Review Agenda

The agenda was reviewed by Commission Chair Karst and the Commission Board Members. Commission Chair Karst asked for a motion to approve. Commission Member Dr. Brown made the motion to approve and Commission Vice Chair Stewart second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A roll call vote of the Commission was as follows: Commission Chair Karst, yes, Commission Vice Chair Stewart, yes, Commission Member Dr. Brown, yes.

Review and Approval of March 27, 2025, Commission Meeting Minutes

Commission Chair Karst and Commission Members reviewed the Commission meeting minutes for March 27, 2025. Commission Chair Karst asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Commission Member Dr. Brown made the motion to approve and Commission Vice Chair Stewart second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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A roll call vote of the Commission was as follows: Commission Chair Karst, yes, Commission Vice Chair Stewart, yes, Commission Member Dr. Brown, yes.

Public Comment

No public comment

Agency Financial Report

Ms. Mok began her presentation by addressing the Chair and the Commission with a report on the FY25 Victim. Payment Budget status. She noted that nearly \$2.3 million in victim payouts have been approved and paid out. Ms. Mok indicated that the current payout rate suggests a remaining fund balance for the next fiscal year. However, Ms. Mok also highlighted the potential for high future payouts, particularly in connection with the Las Cruces shooting, emphasizing the unpredictable nature of victim compensation payments.

Ms. Mok presented the Crime Victim Fund Budget Status Report to the Commission and informed the Commission that CVRC received \$435,000 in restitution and wages from the Department of Corrections. Also, Ms. Mok noted that contributions from penalty assessments are minimal and declining significantly, with most of these funds coming from probation and parole payments.

FY 2025 Crime Victims Fund – Budget Status

Payments received for the period of July 1, 2024, through April 15th, 2025, by category:

Restitution: \$49,139

Corrections: \$359,183

Civil Settlement: \$14,096

Penalty Assessment: \$12,815

Total Received: \$435,253

FY2026 Operating Budget

Ms. Mok reported that the governor has approved the FY 2026 budget, which includes \$500,000 in recurring funding for care and support beginning in that fiscal year. Additionally, \$1 million in one-time special appropriations has been allocated for each sexual assault and domestic violence services. Ms. Mok noted that another \$1 million for each service area is being considered for transfer from the Department of Health to the Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC). If approved, these funds will ensure equitable resource distribution among coalition members and victim service providers statewide.

Mr. Zubia informed the Commission of an unexpected development following a conversation with Eliza Suzanne, the funding coordinator at the Department of Health (DOH). DOH leadership is considering transferring two \$1 million special appropriations—one for sexual assault services and one for domestic violence- to CVRC for administration. This proposal stems from a prior 2019 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between CVRC and DOH, which set a precedent for such arrangements.

DOH raised the capacity issue and suggested that CVRC may be better suited to manage the non-recurring funding. This decision is expected to be notified by next Friday, aligning closely with CVRC's budget submission deadline of May 1st. Mr. Zubia emphasized the challenges posed by this timeline and advised DOH to expedite their decision to allow for proper budget adjustments.

New Business**House Memorial 16(HM16)**

Director Zubia informed the Commission that his office received notification from the House of Representatives, specifically from the Office of the Chief Clerk, Lisa Ortiz McCutcheon. She provided a copy of House Memorial 16, which honors victims of violent crime and their families and recognizes their losses.

Mr. Zubia noted that this is the second year CVRC has been explicitly identified in the memorial, and he wanted to bring this recognition to the Commission's attention.

The Council of State Government (CSG) Justice Center – Compensation Assessment of New Mexico Business

Director Mr. Zubia presented an overview of an assessment initiated in 2023 on the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC). The primary focus of the evaluation was to evaluate CVRC's performance, specifically regarding the compensation program and eligibility determination processes.

Mr. Zubia outlined several key findings and concerns identified during the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC) assessment, conducted in partnership with the Council of State Governments (CSG) and funded by the National Institute of Justice.

Mr. Zubia noted that before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Associated Press raised public concerns alleging that CVRC's compensation program disproportionately impacted marginalized populations, particularly individuals of color, and that there was a lack of consistency in determining claimant eligibility. These criticisms were a contributing factor in the decision to initiate the assessment. As part of the assessment process, the CSG review team requested extensive information and data from our compensation department. Over two years, information was provided and reviewed by CSG and their analyst. CVRC policies and procedures were also supplied and reviewed. CVRC compensation leadership and additional contract workers were also hired to ensure the CSG had all the necessary information for this comprehensive review.

Regarding data analysis, the assessment reviewed records from 2015 to 2019 and found minimal variation in approval rates across racial and ethnic groups in New Mexico. However, challenges were encountered due to CVRC's transition from an outdated legacy data system, which limited access to comprehensive historical data. The assessment resulted in recommendations to enhance program administration, transparency, and equity. Mr. Zubia reported that CVRC has already taken action to implement many of these recommendations. Additionally, the Commission is actively working to improve demographic data collection to ensure more accurate representation and support future evaluations of its compensation programs.

CSG analyst met with CVRC staff for a six-hour close-out session to provide findings and recommendations that examined the agency's eligibility determination procedures and gathered detailed insights into its operational framework. Director Zubia concluded by emphasizing CVRC's ongoing commitment to addressing these findings and strengthening its services for all victims of crime in the state. The presentation from CSG will be available on the CVRC Website.

Status on Las Cruces Shooting

Director Mr. Zubia provided an update on the ongoing efforts of the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC) in responding to the Las Cruces shooting. The office has received a total of 31 compensation applications from individuals directly impacted by the incident. To manage these cases, state investigator supervisor, Rebecca Duran, has been assigned to handle all 31 applications.

In an effort to ensure efficient and non-duplicative assistance, CVRC is collaborating closely with the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico. The two organizations are working together to coordinate services, specifically with funding, with individuals being referred to the foundation for needs that fall outside the scope of CVRC's coverage.

In terms of financial support, CVRC has already provided assistance with two funeral expenses and is actively working to obtain medical billing information from several local hospitals, including Memorial Medical Center, Mountain View Regional Hospital and Three Crosses Medical Center in Las Cruces, and University Medical Center, Sierra Providence Medical Centers in El Paso. This initiative is focused on addressing the medical needs of 15 victims who sustained gunshot wounds in the shooting.

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Additionally, CVRC has extended support to the families of victims, offering assistance with accommodations to help them stay near their loved ones in El Paso as needed.

Lastly, Director Zubia reported that a meeting is scheduled for May 2nd, 2025, which will involve representatives from 30 organizations in Las Cruces. This meeting aims to provide updates and coordinate follow-up services for those affected by the shooting.

Director Mr. Zubia expressed confidence in CVRC's handling of the situation and deferred to Ms. Richmond for any additional Comments.

Ms. Richmond informed the Commission of ongoing efforts to support the victims of the Las Cruces shooting. An after-action review is scheduled for May 2nd to evaluate the response of community services providers, ensuring all victims have been contacted and their needs addressed.

Injured individuals were initially transported to five hospitals-three in Las Cruces and two in El Paso. Ms. Duran is coordinating with these hospitals to collect medical records and facilitate coverage for the extensive medical expenses incurred. These efforts aim to provide comprehensive support to the victims and their families.

Grant Status Report (VOCA, VAWA, SASP and State Funds)

Ms. Richmond provided an update on the grant status report, noting that the current fiscal year is nearing completion. The agency is reviewing budgets as part of the closeout activities. Additionally, preliminary drafts of Request for Proposals (RFP) are being prepared to allocate newly appropriated funding from the state legislature. This RFP will guide the distribution of resources in the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Zubia addressed the Commission, stating that updates on ongoing matters would be provided at the next meeting. He appreciated the Commission Chair's participation in the VAWA peer review process and encouraged continued involvement after the solicitation for state appropriations was released and responses were received. Mr. Zubia highlighted the importance of the Chair's engagement in understanding the process and addressing any potential concerns.

STOP VAWA FY2025 Preliminary Award Recommendation (Voting Item)

Kristin Wood-Hegner, the VAWA Grant Administrator, reported that on January 21, 2025, the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC) released the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Fiscal Year 2026 STOP VAWA funding opportunity. The submission period for proposals closed on March 3. Of the 19 current subrecipients eligible for continuation funding under their four-year funding cycle, 18 submitted applications totaling \$672,269.

Ms. Wood-Hegner noted that CVRC also received 22 competitive proposals, which were reviewed and scored by a review committee according to the RFP guidelines. Based on these evaluations, the committee recommended 11 competitive proposals for preliminary approval, totaling \$629,016. The Commission's agenda included a detailed list of recommended competitive awards.

The Commission's roll call vote was as follows: Commission Chair Karst, yes; Commission Member Stewart, yes; Commission Member Dr. Brown, yes.

VAWA SASP FY2025 Preliminary Award Recommendation (Voting Item)

Ms. Wood-Hegner reported that on February 24, 2025, the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC) released the Fiscal Year 2026 VAWA Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) funding opportunity. The proposal period for this solicitation closed on March 31. No agencies were eligible for continuation funding under this opportunity.

Ms. Wood-Hegner noted that CVRC received one competitive application submitted by the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. The peer review committee evaluated the proposal and recommended it for preliminary approval by the Commission. Pending final approval, CVRC will issue an award of \$814,954 to the Coalition, which will distribute the funds to agencies across the state.

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The Commission's roll call vote was as follows: Commission Chair Karst, yes; Commission Member Stewart, yes; Commission Member Dr. Brown, yes

Executive Session

At 10:44 a.m. Commission Chair Karst asked for a motion to enter Executive Session.

A roll call vote of the Commission was as follows: Commission Chair Karst, yes, Commission Member Stewart, yes, Commission Member Dr. Brown, yes.

At 10:51 a.m. Commission Chair Karst made a motion to come out of Executive Session.

Action on Item Discussed in Executive Session (Voting Item)

Claim # 252037

Mr. Zubia asked the Commission Members for a motion on claim #252037 to deny or approve. Commission members voted unanimously to deny this claim.

A roll call vote of the Commission was as follows: Commission Chair Karst, deny, Commission Vice Chair Stewart, deny, Commission Member Dr. Brown, deny.

The next Commission meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., at New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission, 6200 Uptown Blvd. NE, Suite 210, in Albuquerque, NM, in the conference room.

Adjourn

At 10:54 a.m., Commission Chair Karst adjourned the April 24, 2025 Commission meeting.

APPROVED:  Signed by: _____ DATE: 5/23/2025
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Commission Chair Karst