Violence Intervention and Prevention Advisory Council Meeting

December 18, 2024
Time: 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Virtual
Subject: Site Presentation and Grant/Council Updates

Council Goals and Objectives

- To develop recommendations that guide the implementation of the Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (VIPP) fund as established by the Public Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2018 (House Bill 432/Chapter 148).
- To support the establishment of outcome-based performance measures relating to awarded programs published on the legislatively required filterable data display.
- To review applications and recommend programs for funding based on best- and/or most promising practices for health and hospital-based violence reduction strategies, specifically gun violence, in Maryland.
- To provide oversight on the allocation of funds for the evaluation of the efficacy of funded programs.

Participating Members:

Bethany Young	**Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP)**	**Chair**
Aisha Burgess	Baltimore City Health Department	Health
Kathryn Montgomery	University of Maryland, Baltimore	Higher Education
Joseph Richardson	University of Maryland, College Park	Higher Education

Staff:
Melissa Bitting, VIPP Coordinator, GOCPP

Guests:
Amanda Cissner, Justice Innovation, Inc.
Angela Cochran, SMCHD
Elise White, Justice Innovation, Inc.
Michelle Pottinger, SMCHD

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcoming and Introduction
   A. Call to order
      1. The meeting was called to order at **12:02 p.m.** by **Chair Bethany Young, Director of Policy and Legislation,** Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy.
   B. Introductions
      1. Council members, GOCPP staff, and guests introduced themselves.
   C. Approval of Minutes
      1. Due to the lack of quorum at the October 2024 meeting, no formalization of meeting minutes occurred, however the minutes from the July 24th, 2024 meeting were approved with a motion by Ms. Montgomery, seconded by Dr. Richardson.

II. Updates
   A. VIPP Grant
      1. At this time, we are approaching the end of the second quarter of the grant cycle. The continuation programs, with the exception of one, have all been doing very well with the implementation of their projects and their quarterly reporting. Based on the Quarter One progress and financial reports, some newly funded projects are progressing well, while others are still in early stages due to the delayed funding and implementation. The second quarter will conclude by the end of the calendar year. We expect to have a clearer picture of program performance around the end of January.
   B. Programs
      1. The second learning collaborative meeting for FY25 grant subrecipients is scheduled for January 8th, 2025. In addition to open discussion surrounding program progress, we will be providing technical assistance on the reporting process, as there have been instances of late or insufficient reports. The meeting will be held one week before report submission deadlines to serve as a reminder for timely reporting, as well as allow time for revisions.
      2. Programs' Progress and Site Visits
         a) Council members received updates regarding program and financial progress of each of the 19 FY25 subrecipients, discussing some successes and shortcomings, as well as potential site visits.
         b) Due to delayed funding and the holidays, site visit scheduling will be decided after the Q2 reports are reviewed. The grants staff will discuss and plan visits, and Council members will be notified if they are interested in attending.
   C. Reports

1. As required by Section 4-906(c)(2) of the Public Safety Article, the office is working on the annual report. Delayed final reports from FY24 programs have now been submitted, except for one agency that has been unresponsive. While there is not a mandated deadline for this, the annual report will be shared with the Council once completed.

III. Presentation: St. Mary's County Health Department

A. Overview

1. The St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) shared their ongoing efforts to address violence prevention in Southern Maryland, particularly focusing on the Lexington Park area, which has seen an increase in violent crime, in part due to risk factors like health issues. Their initiatives were shaped by a 2020 community health assessment, which identified violence, injury, and trauma as key areas of concern. The department has been working on expanding partnerships, increasing community awareness, and distributing resources like gun locks and safes to help prevent gun-related injuries.

B. Progress and Achievements

1. SMCHD has made notable strides in expanding their violence prevention programs. They launched the Mentoring Connections Program, providing referrals to mentors for youth in need of guidance, and trained community members in Botvin Life Skills to help improve decision-making. The evidence-based strategy includes community moral voices, law enforcement, and service. Their Group Violence Intervention (GVI) program has been successful, reaching high-risk individuals through personalized notifications offering support for a violence-free lifestyle. Additionally, they distributed 1,300 gun locks and 75 gun safes, making a direct impact on gun safety in the community.

C. Future Directions

1. SMCHD plans to use their FY25 VIPP grant to continue expanding their programs, particularly by growing the Mentoring Connections Program and enhancing their community outreach efforts. They aim to recruit more staff, including a Violence Prevention Coordinator and a Community Violence Outreach Worker, to bolster their outreach and support services. They also plan to host a Community Violence Prevention Day in June 2025 to highlight the success of their initiatives and strengthen their ties with community partners. These efforts will be complemented by a continued focus on evaluating and improving their program's long-term effectiveness.

IV. Q&A

A. During the Q&A session, the Council discussed how SMCHD could improve their evaluation process, particularly distinguishing between upstream (preventative) and downstream (intervention) successes. Dr. Richardson recommended exploring research opportunities through UMD programs like PROGRESS and MCRIC to gain more insight and technical assistance. The Department also acknowledged challenges in capturing the long-term impacts of their programs, but they are working toward better evaluation strategies as they move forward.

V. Council Priorities

A. The Council began to brainstorm potential future priorities and ideas for the VIPP fund and the Council itself. A few ideas such as amending performance measures, the requirement for programs to honor an evidence-based model, as well as funding amounts, were all briefly discussed. A Google Form will be sent to Council members following the meeting to provide more space for feedback, and further discussion will take place in the March 2025 meeting.

VI. Other Business

A. Six appointees are still needed to fill vacancies on the Council: three appointments from the Senate President and three from the Speaker of the House.

B. Next meetings:

1. As discussed in October, our new meeting schedule will be December, March, June, and September, with the Spring and Fall meetings in-person and the winter and summer meetings virtual. Therefore our next meeting will be in-person at our Crownsville office in March. The tentative meeting dates for 2025 are as follows:
    a) Wednesday, March 5th, 2025 (in-person)
    b) Wednesday, June 11th, 2025 (virtual)
    c) Wednesday, September 24th, 2025 (in-person)
    d) Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025 (virtual)

VII. Adjournment

A. The meeting was adjourned by **Bethany Young** at **1:30 p.m.**