

**Texas Association of Regional Councils - Notes**  
**Bi-Annual Training**  
**Joint Public Safety - CIPA/HSAT**  
**9-18-2024**

A joint meeting of the TARC Homeland Security Association of Texas and the TARC Criminal Justice Planners Association was held on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at the Hilton Austin Airport, Bergstrom C.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM.

CIPA Business Meeting:

Approval of prior meeting minutes

Old Business

New Business

Election of Officers-Tabled

Adjourn

HSAT Business Meeting:

Approval of prior meeting minutes

Old Business

New Business

Adjourn

The business meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

**9:00 AM – FY25 Interlocal Contract Updates – Kim Hild**

- Follow the FY2024 Contract with reviewing the FY2025 Renewal Document (Amendment)
- Important dates and reminders:
  - 30 Days prior to eGrants application submission dates make available to potential applicants COG Priorities, workshop attendee requirements, and information related to availability of training materials.
  - Make current funding opportunities publicly available on the COG's website – 14 days prior to any COG imposed requirements.
  - CJ Priority List 5-9-2025
  - Notify applicants within 14 days of COG's Decision
  - Signed Resolution or approved meeting minutes containing the Executive Committee to OOG by June 10, 2025.
- BIG Change – CJAC Membership Changes – FY2024 Contract Amendment takes the place of it – why changes now? PSO wants to make sure all COG's/Regional Councils have CJAC's that are well rounded with a diversified make up of disciplines listed within the contract. PSO is clarifying their intentions as these disciplines may not have been as clear in prior contracts.
- Monthly Invoices – New PO #'s and Pos were sent out by email – please ensure the FY is updated to reflect FY2025. Ensure you put contract related activity hours. The PSO wants to know activities performed for the month – include the time you worked updating your invoice. Put what actually happened in that billing period. Call if you have questions (512) 463-8570.

**9:30 AM – Texas Crime Stoppers Program Overview – Lindsey Ysla**

Texas Crime Stoppers organizations are community-based partnerships formed by dedicated citizens, law enforcement, and the media. They work together toward a common goal: the

reduction of crime and the arrest and conviction of criminals and fugitives statewide. Local Crime Stoppers organizations are designed to serve as a vehicle for citizens to relay criminal information to law enforcement agencies while remaining anonymous. Since inception in 1981, Texas Crime

Stoppers has grown from 8 certified organizations to approximately 150 certified community and campus organizations. These organizations are run by dedicated volunteers, making it a cost-effective tool in preventing and solving crime.

Local Crime Stoppers organizations are designed to achieve citizen interest and involvement in three ways:

- Anonymity
- Establishing reward systems that pay for information leading to the arrest or charges filed on persons involved in crimes, and
- Selecting an unsolved “Crime of the Week” featured by reenactment in nightly television news broadcasts, radio spots, and newspaper articles.

#### Local History given to include July 1976 story of Michael Carmen

- Start of the Name and Tips Hotline
- In the spring of 1981, the 67th Texas Legislature passed H.B. 1681 creating the Crime Stoppers Council within the Criminal Justice Division of the OOG to promote the establishment of local Crime Stoppers organizations throughout the state. The council consists of five members appointed by the governor to four-year terms. Since its inception, Texas Crime Stoppers has grown from eight certified organizations to nearly 150 certified organizations in operation today, serving in both communities and school campuses throughout Texas.
- Texas Crime Stoppers State Team – What they provide and do.
- In addition to their community and campus organizations across the state, the Texas Crime Stoppers team at the Office of the Governor has a partnership with the Texas Department of Public Safety “Most Wanted Programs.” These programs identify most wanted fugitives and sex offenders in Texas. Since 2014, the number of Texas DPS partnership programs have grown to include Texas Stash House Rewards, Texas Fallen Hero Rewards and Unique Incidents Reward offerings (i.e. explosive package case, I-35 rock throwing, Governor’s Mansion fire, etc.). Newest Program – Texas Criminal Illegal Immigrants.
- Newest Program – Texas Criminal Illegal Immigrants.
- How award programs work – Tip Reporting leads to rewards paid.
- Benefits include – tip givers are kept anonymous – leads to increased crime salving, community engagements, educational outreach, and partnerships with the media.
- Review of what can be reported
- Statistics from 2023 were reviewed to include recovering over 7.2 million in stolen goods. Campus Program Statistics were also given.
- Website to get more information: [www.thetexascrimestoppers.org](http://www.thetexascrimestoppers.org)

## **10:00 AM – Aimee Snoddy, Executive Director for the Public Safety Office, Officer of the Governor**

General victim Assistance Grant Information and the funding outlook as of September 2024.

- Over the last ten (10) years the Crimes Victim Fund has been awarded money in the millions.
- Average deposits into this fund are reducing significantly at the federal level.
- The VOCA Fix Program started in 2021 whereby state reserves were hoping to be held in an effort of the reduction in the fund to not be felt at such drastic levels.
- The Public Safety Office is watching this fund at the federal level very closely. In 2024 the Crime Victims Stabilization Act was introduced. Texas Historical Funding from 2018-2025 – 75% went to local non-profits and the rest to local government agencies. OOG wants to see more non-profit agencies on the CJAC's at the COG levels.
- In 2024-2025 - \$118 million appropriated
  - Data is beginning to show an expected \$37% reduction in VOCA for 2026 – All reserves will be utilized in 2026
  - And another 17% reduction in 2027
  - 2027, 2028, and 2029 data trends showing approximately \$113 Million appropriated
  - HOW DO WE FIX – the OOG plans to ask for more dollars – They want us to share this information with senior members. Cause of depletion: The lack of federal cases is causing deposits into this fund to reduce significantly.

## **10:15 AM Justice Programs Updates - "Prioritizing Victims Services" Panel Discussion**

### **Moderator: Hillary England**

Context from panel and what our CJAC's need.

Impact of Victim Services and agency services people need to be able to call a hotline and be able to know there are spaces of safety they can access when home isn't safe for them. It is all the contexts in light that come together to get support from grant funding. Know that families and organizations need this funding for Core Services. SAA's (Sexual Assault Advocates are needed). SAAs remain the point of contact from beginning to end and are regulated by the office of the attorney general. 1 in 5 men and 2 in 5 women will be sexually assaulted in some way and will likely not report it or engage in the system.

Think systemically and coordinated efforts. Everyone partners together – DA's need community support like the food banks, shelters and clothing banks all while victims are waiting for their cases to be resolved/heard. The Das office received 32,000 cases and were able to help a little over 20,000 in 2023. Data shows that revictimization occurs 7-8 times before the victim/survivor will decide to leave or stay. Chapt. 56 – Right to be heard.

Law Enforcement meets the victims/survivors needs where they are at and does a warm hand off to system-based and community-based advocates. Identifying their roles and collaborating to work together as a network to get the needs addressed and point out what each agency does to help their needs.

As a COG what do we need to ensure services are provided to community members:

- Collaboration
- 1<sup>st</sup> provide what is necessary – transportation, childcare, what they need to even begin a life after victimization
- SART Coverage in every county is mission critical
- Sheer number of applications required to review by a CJAC can be overwhelming to its members. (Advise – Don't get bogged down by why apps sound redundant or question why are there several domestic violence shelters applying for this money. There are gaps in knowledge - just try to give full attention to understanding the purpose of each applicant and execute with excellence. It may seem overwhelming but ALWAYS appreciate the full weight of the decisions you make as a member of the committee you sit on. These agencies are from ALL Over the Region. Rural areas that don't have access to dollars. This may be why applications seem redundant.

### Open Meetings Act:

- Why do we have an open meetings act?
- Open Meetings Act Handbook on the Office of Attorney General's website.
- Discussed presumption of openness
- Which entities are subject to the open meetings act? Long List
- COGs are political subdivisions of a county or a municipality and are subject to the open meetings act. Question: Are subcommittees subject to open meetings act. If a subcommittee doesn't make quorum or make any decisions/changes it generally doesn't fall under the act.
- What depicts a quorum? Generally, if the majority of a body is present unless defined differently by the act and applicable law
- 1<sup>st</sup> step is the Notice. Must include date, hour with AM/PM behind the times, place and subject matter. \*Note\* AM or PM for Rio Grande include a time zone on the notice. Post within 7 days/72 hours before hand – Weekends Do Not County before the start of a meeting. Best Practice – have executive admin place a time/date stamp on the notice.
- COG – Protect your notices and post in a convenient place for the public to see – if it falls off you must start all over. Question – Does a Website Count – yes but with parameters.
- Use a locked space for posting your notices
- May broadcast over the internet but not required by law
- Recordkeeping – keep the subject of every deliberation and if any vote was given. The law doesn't state that you need to put that level of detail on who motioned and who 2nded in a vote but if that wasn't caught in a meeting maybe put a disclaimer in the minutes that this level of detail tries to be taken at every meeting but there are times when this level of detail is not attainable.
- NO FINAL VOTE OR ACTION CAN BE TAKEN IN A CLOSED MEETING
- If you start in an open meeting and then convene into a closed session- identify the provision before going into a closed session and you can only talk about the specific item announced in the open meeting.
- Closed meeting recordkeeping – Keep a certified agenda or record of any further action in a closed meeting – this is to protect your agency or COG.
- Socialization outside a committee is ok if NO discussion of public business takes place

- Addressing emergencies/natural disasters etc....- use of online message boards, teleconferencing in an emergency, quorum in video conferencing - All standards for video conferencing are listed in the AV Standards on the DIR (Texas Department of Information Resources) website. Discussion took place regarding Quorums. Walking Quorums – attempts to avoid the Open Meetings Act Requirements – CANNOT BREAK UP INTO MINI MEETINGS.
- Also be cautious of your emails – written or oral communication could constitute a deliberation and an unauthorized meeting for purposes of the Act.
- Code for printing certificates – TXOMA873