

# H.B. 177 – Trauma-Informed Justice Provisions

## Summary Findings and Recommendations

This bill was passed during the 2018 Utah Legislative General Session, creating a trauma-informed justice program which seeks to minimize re-traumatization associated with all aspects of the criminal justice system in Utah. A Multi-Disciplinary Trauma-Informed Committee (MDTIC) was established to provide oversight and ensure a review of current and recommended trauma-informed policies, procedures, programs, or practices is completed by September 1, 2019. The University of Utah, College of Social Work's Social Research Institute (SRI) was contracted to analyze and recommend findings relative to H.B.177 implementation. Each required component of the bill follows with a finding / recommendation.

### **1. Review the role of victim advocates and victim services in the criminal and juvenile justice system.**

The role of victim advocates and victim services in Utah is varied. The vast majority of victim services are funded by federal sources flowing through the Utah Office for Victims of Crime. Three levels of victim services currently exist: state-level services, local system-based crime victim services, and local community-based crime victim services that deliver services within specific catchment areas. Victim advocates and other professionals provide a variety of services to crime victims and their families based on the mission of the entity where they are employed.

### **2. Determine how to implement the option of a comprehensive, seamless victim advocate system that is based on the best interests of victims and assists a victim throughout the criminal and juvenile justice system or victim's process of recovering from the trauma the victim experienced as a result of being a victim of crime.**

This requirement has two components: A) implementing a comprehensive, seamless victim advocate system that is based on the best interests of the victims, and B) develop and implement a system with capacity to respond in a more trauma-informed

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way. The ideal victim advocate system would have the capacity to provide seamless case management services to crime victims throughout their entire experience with the criminal justice system. All crime victim services should be provided in alignment with the OVC Model Standards and based on victim centered principles and practices. A trauma-informed system requires a comprehensive approach that includes much more than staff training.

### **3. Recommend what minimum qualifications a victim advocate must meet, including recommending trauma-informed training or trauma-informed continuing education hours;**

Crime victim advocates in Utah comprise a diverse range of professional service providers. Most with extensive academic preparation and many with years of experience. These victim advocates receive extensive initial training as well as on-going professional development experiences. There are multiple potential pathways to improved workforce development. The MDTIC will continue to explore these options regarding victim advocate qualifications. Further, aligning recommendations for trauma-informed training requirements between H.B. 177 and those of H.B. 53 from the 2019 Legislative session, will be completed prior to June 2020.

### **4. Reviewing of best practice standards and protocols, including recommending adoption or creation of trauma-informed interview protocols that may be used to train persons within the criminal and juvenile justice system concerning trauma-informed policies, procedures, programs, or practices, including the training of various professions.**

The scientific literature and recommendations from the most authoritative entities offer sound, supported, trauma-informed guidelines which will ensure high quality victim centered policies, procedures, programs, or practices. These are based on Office for Victims of Crime Model Standards, the Substance Abuse and

Mental Health (SAMHSA) and National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) guidelines.

**5. Recommending outcome-based metrics to measure achievement related to trauma-informed policies, procedures, programs, or practices**

The ARTIC (Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care) is the most accepted assessment instrument for assessing the status of trauma-informed individuals and agencies. Six Utah agencies in the criminal and juvenile justice system have conducted a baseline assessment as part of an overall agency self-assessment process that will continue for several years. A follow-up assessment to determine outcome changes will be administered when agency self-assessment processes are complete.

**6. Recommending minimum qualifications and continuing education of individuals providing training, consultation, or administrative supervisory consultation within the criminal and juvenile justice system regarding trauma-informed policies, procedures, programs or practices.**

A number of different training resources, options, and approaches are available in Utah to support effective workforce development focusing on trauma-informed policies, procedures, programs and practices.

**7. Identifying needs that are not funded or that would benefit from additional resources.**

Several needs with specific funding requirements have been identified. These include on-going support of criminal and juvenile justice agency trauma-informed self-assessments and implementing an effective crime victim feedback system that empowers victims and supports continuous quality improvement among victim advocate service providers.

**8. Identifying funding sources, including outlining the restrictions on the funding sources that may fund trauma-informed policies, procedures, programs, and practices.**

Collaborate, consult with, and support Resilient Utah's "Center for Resilient Utah" (CRU) proposal, which was accepted by the Intergenerational Welfare Reform

Commission. The majority of funding for advocacy services in Utah are federal funds administered through the Utah Office for Victims of Crime. A comparatively small amount of state general funds are made available to the Private Not for Profit Domestic Violence Shelter programs across the state. State general fund dollars can be allocated as determined by the legislature, however, the federal funds require the funding of almost exclusively responsive, direct services to victims of crime and permit only small amounts spent on public awareness, crime prevention, research and other very important areas critical to decreasing the rates of victimization.

**9. Recommending which governmental entities should have the responsibility for assuring the implementation of the recommendations of the committee.**

To be determined.

**10. Recommendations if any, for legislation or appropriations to meet budget needs.**

\$45,000 per year to conduct a semi-annual crime victim survey. Potential opportunity for the development and funding of a Trauma Informed Ombudsmen to assure continued pursuit of a Trauma Informed Justice System.

**11. Performance incentive grant program.**

To be determined. In the final stages of development.

**Sunset the MDTIC June 30, 2019.**