



Governor's Commission  
to Prevent Intimate Partner  
and Gender-Based Violence

**Governor's Commission to Prevent Intimate Partner and Gender Based Violence**

**March 05, 2024, 10:00 AM**

**Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys' Advisory Council (APAAC)**

**3838 N. Central Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85012**

A general meeting of the Governor's Commission to Prevent Intimate Partner and Gender-Based Violence convened on March 05, 2024, with notice duly given.

<b>Members Present (11)</b>	<b>Members Absent (1)</b>
<b>Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair</b>	<b>Nicole Bidwill</b>
<b>Kirstin Flores</b>	
<b>Maritza Valenzuela, Proxy for Sheila Sjolander</b>	
<b>Jenna Panas</b>	
<b>Ed-Mercurio-Sakwa</b>	
<b>Greg Giangobbe, Proxy for Neil Websdale</b>	
<b>Jon Eliason</b>	
<b>Tene'D Marion</b>	
<b>Jon Smith</b>	
<b>Patricia Klahr</b>	
<b>Beth Hoel</b>	
<b>Staff and Guests Present (7)</b>	
<b>Emily Uline-Olmstead, Staff</b>	<b>Donna Bartos, Presenter</b>
<b>Sandra Mucino, Staff</b>	<b>Aanya Venkat, Presenter</b>
<b>Chantel Hutchinson, Staff</b>	<b>Sonya Colattur, Presenter</b>
<b>Kainoa Spenser, Staff</b>	

**Call to Order**

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, called the Governor's Commission to Prevent Intimate Partner and Gender-Based Violence meeting to order at **10:07 AM** with **11** members and **seven** staff/guests present.

**Welcome/Introductions**

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, welcomed everyone, conducted roll call, and reached a quorum.

**Approval of Minutes**

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the May 9, August 15, and November 14, 2023 meeting minutes.

- **Kirsten Flores** moved to accept the May 9, August 15, and November 14, 2023 minutes.
- **Beth Hoel** seconded the motion.
- **Jon Eliason** voted to abstain.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

#### **Arizona Department of Health Services Rape Prevention and Education Program**

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, introduced **Maritza Valenzuela**, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Office of Injury Prevention Chief, to provide an overview of their Rape Prevention and Education Program (RPE).
- **Maritza Valenzuela** thanked the Commission for inviting her to speak and began her presentation by providing historical context on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) RPE.
  - Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, authorizing the RPE program and providing direct funding, tools, and guidance for state and territorial health departments.
  - Arizona renamed the RPE program to the Sexual Violence Prevention Education Program (SVPEP) with the mission to have an Arizona free of sexual violence through sustainable education, collaboration, and advocacy.
  - ADHS received the first 5-year award with an estimated \$749,000 in funding for SVPEP.
- **Maritza Valenzuela** introduced the SVPEP activities within its most recent cycle of 2019-2024.
  - ADHS competitively awarded ten subrecipients to implement a strategy and create an action plan for sexual assault primary prevention, identifying and addressing risk protective factors at societal and community levels.
  - The data produced a report and a state action plan in 2019. However, ADHS sought to reassess the pre-pandemic data and create a comprehensive analysis that could reflect the current data.
  - A surveillance report will be released in the Spring of 2024 to convey the effectiveness of SVPEP and other areas of improvement within sexual assault.
- **Maritza Valenzuela** discussed the planned 2024-2029 SVPEP activities funded by the renewed RPE grant cycle with an increased award amount of \$874,476.
  - A significant focus will be to increase the promotion of community- and societal-level interventions across the state by releasing a Request for Grant Proposal this coming spring. The awarded subrecipients will revisit the 2019 statewide sexual violence assessment and improve the previously published action plan in conjunction with ADHS.
  - Funds from RPE will additionally build the capacity of partners to shift social norms, policies, and practices that prevent sexual violence in Arizona communities.
- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, invited **Jenna Panas** to provide insight on her partnership with the RPE program.
- **Jenna Panas** reported the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (ACESDV) also received funding through the RPE program and collaborates closely with ADHS to coordinate and provide guidance on the programming. Arizona's initiatives are focused heavily on individual intervention but hopes the shifting focus to community- and societal-based efforts will yield fruitful results for sexual violence prevention.
- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, requested clarity from **Jenna Panas** on programming models in other states. **Jenna Panas** explained that ACESDV is reviewing a California model as a blueprint for their action plan as it has robust intervention tactics and is evidence-based.
- **Kirsten Flores** inquired about the difference between community-based vs. individual intervention. **Jenna Panas** expanded on the tiers at which prevention takes place. At a personal level, the focus

is on teaching healthy relationships to a specific student to prevent teen dating violence. At the same time, from a wider lens, a community-based intervention involves changing social structures and economic environments to address prevention directly. Community-based interventions insulate an entire community from that risk.

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, thanked **Maritza Valenzuela** for her presentation.
- To view **Maritza Valenzuela's** presentation, [click here](#)

### Lead Peer Advocate Program

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, introduced **Donna Bartos**, BLOOM365 Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
  - Ms. Bartos' was inspired by her lived experience and two decades of self-guided research that created her "Are you blooming or wilting" prevention education curriculum, bringing tools and strategies to reduce the risk of interpersonal violence in younger generations.
- **Donna Bartos** started her presentation by explaining that domestic violence and sexual assault are not just "adult" problems; 60% of teens report experiencing teen dating abuse nationwide.
- **Ms. Bartos** reviewed the data BLOOM365 has compiled over eight years by surveying 36,000 Maricopa County teens, revealing that 50% of teens have experienced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse. Part of the survey asked teen participants to disclose if they were the ones who were physically, sexually, or emotionally abusive, to which 29% anonymously admitted. The fundamental purpose of these surveys is to receive anonymous data and plan intentional interventions.
- **Donna Bartos** explained that the response to the problem is twofold and should be comprehensive, considering the prevention pipeline.
  - Prevention takes place in 3 stages:
    - Primary: Preventing abuse before it begins.
    - Secondary: Reducing the risk of harm to self or others and interrupting abuse from happening again.
    - Tertiary: Inspiring healing and providing support after abuse.
  - The state's investment in prevention and intervention programming estimates the importance of focusing on prevention work and utilizing prevention components from the social-ecological model. This model provides a visual framework of the four tiers of prevention:
    - Individual: You
    - Relationships: Friends, Family, Peers, Social Networks
    - Community: Schools, Neighborhoods, Teams, Military, Faith Organizations, and Businesses
    - Society: Media, Government, and Social Norms
- **Donna Bartos** used the social-ecological model to form the Lead Peer Advocate group, which consists of high school students encouraging peer support and acting as a liaison between the student body and school staff. Lead Peer Advocates inform leadership of the current issues in their generation and potential solutions. Ms. Bartos used the term "activate" to refer to encouraging teens in high school to spread awareness of the risk factors associated with teen dating violence. The Lead Peer Advocates aim to engage with 10% of their student body during advocacy campaigns to visibly show intolerance of interpersonal violence, thus "uprooting" violence and furthering peer support.
- **Jon Eliason** thanked **Donna Bartos** for the hard work that lead peer advocates are doing throughout Maricopa County.
- **Kirsten Flores** asked how she is creating partnerships with school districts.

- **Donna Bartos** responded that her program is in New York, Utah, Wyoming, Pennsylvania, and military academies. BLOOM365 has strategically created a Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with school districts since she recognizes that more than one-time guest speaking engagements are required. She also expressed concern with school districts who may have misinterpreted the program's intentions but stated that the program is well received overall.
- **Jon Eliason** asked if there are any research studies on the correlation between teen dating violence and regular teen rates of violence.
  - **Donna Bartos** responded that there are statistics on school shooters who have a history of teen dating violence.
- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, thanked **Donna Bartos** for her presentation.
- To view **Donna Bartos's** presentation, [click here](#).

#### **Governor's Youth Commission, Domestic Violence Workgroup**

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, introduced **Sonya Colattur** and **Aanya Venkat** from the Governor's Youth Commission (GYC).
  - **Sonya Colattur** is the current GYC President and previously appointed Domestic Violence Workgroup Co-Chair.
  - **Aanya Venkat** is the current Co-Chair of the Domestic Violence Workgroup.
- **Sonya Colattur** and **Aanya Venkat** began their presentation by reflecting on the impact of community outreach, highlighting previous events held in March 2023, their Hygiene Product Drive that started in October 2023, and their upcoming March 2024 event.
  - Since October 2023, over \$34,000 in monetary value of hygiene and clothing products for local domestic violence shelters have been collected. Unfortunately, the ever-changing landscape of the communities during the pandemic decreased donations and overall involvement. Still, they have successfully incorporated more effective strategies in their outreach to encourage their communities. They have worked diligently to encourage fellow students to donate items to local shelters in their counties, thus allowing the general student body to be more informed about teen dating violence and domestic violence. Their current cohort represents 14 of the 15 Arizona counties, expanding their reach statewide.
- **Kirsten Flores** commended **Sonya Colattur** and **Aanya Venkat** for how articulate and impressive they are in presenting their work, considering they are both high school students.
- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Chair**, thanked **Sonya Colattur** and **Aanya Venkat** for their presentation.
- To view **Sonya Colattur** and **Aanya Venkat's** presentation, [click here](#).

#### **Commission and Workgroup Outputs Discussion**

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Chair**, shared the names of the three current workgroups under the Commission:
  - Outreach and Awareness
  - Victim Services
  - Education and Training
- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, invited Commissioners to share their thoughts on the current workgroup structure and how to get the most out of them.
- **Jenna Panas** emphasized "prevent" in the Commission name, stating that while outreach is good and victim services focus on intervention, she would like to redirect work starting at the highest tier.
- **Ed Mercurio-Sakwa** echoed **Jenna Panas'** sentiment on focusing on prevention with more proactive initiatives to address the issues before intervention.

- **Jon Eliason** stated that the goal of prevention is challenging without consequences for behaviors and referenced his experience as a prosecutor, noting that a system of accountability is needed. He added an analogy about normalizing smoking by society in past generations, but is currently frowned upon.
- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, concurred with **Jon Eliason** and shared that the perception around intimate partner violence needs to change. Certain unhealthy behaviors seemed normal and part of the culture decades ago, but that may not be the case anymore.
- **Kirsten Flores** referenced the depiction of sexual assault in sitcoms during her upbringing and how we have successfully transitioned as a society to call out inappropriate behaviors in our media. **Kirsten Flores** requested clarification on the role of Commissioners and workgroups.
- **Emily Uline-Olmstead** stated that the purpose of the workgroups is ultimately to further the vision and mission of the commission based on Governor Hobbs' priorities.
- **Greg Giangobbe, proxy for Neil Websdale**, stated that law enforcement officers continue training on the importance of actively listening to victims and referring them to resources, resulting in victims feeling supported and motivated to create a safety plan. However, one of his current concerns is the need for more advocates in rural communities.
- **Tene'D Marion** highlighted the need to create a platform or infrastructure to house various resources. She stated there is a roadmap to resources missing before the intervention stage and utilizing agencies and family advocacy centers to embed resources in the school system, such as GYC, BLOOM365's Lead Peer Advocate program, and Young Parent University.
- **Maritza Valenzuela, proxy for Sheila Sjolander**, shared that the renewed CDC funding comes with community and societal focus tools that could be useful for drafting primary prevention initiatives in Arizona.
- **Jon Smith** posed a question for the Commissioners to reflect on by asking how often there is a victim, and they do not know what resources are available other than reporting to law enforcement. He concurs with the sentiment of placing focus on prevention for the workgroups.
- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, thanked the Commissioners for their input and stated that this will be an ongoing conversation.

### Upcoming Meetings

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, provided the upcoming meeting dates:
  - May 21, 2024
  - August 27, 2024
  - November 12, 2024

### Adjourn

- **Elizabeth Ortiz, Co-Chair**, called for an adjournment of the meeting.
  - **Jon Eliason** motioned to adjourn.
  - **Jenna Panas** seconded the motion.
- The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at **11:21 AM**.

Dated the 6th of March 2024

Governor's Commission to Prevent Intimate Partner and Gender-Based Violence

Respectfully Submitted By:

Sandra M. Mucino  
Program Administrator