Executive Summary

This report summarizes the work of the second year of the inaugural Attorney General’s Survivors Council, convened to help inform policy, training, education and other efforts are victim-centered. The twenty-one members, survivors of crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, DUI, felony assault stalking, revenge porn, child abuse, mass shooting and other serious offenses, have met quarterly and in legislative, victim guide and education and awareness subcommittees. Together, the Council members have participated in over 12 events across Kentucky, including conferences, press appearances, awareness events, to raise awareness of crime and stress the importance and impact of having survivor leaders at the table. They have developed resources to guide both professionals and survivor leaders in their work together on behalf of victims of crime. To improve justice and healing for victims of crime in the Commonwealth, the Council issued multiple recommendations, including budget and legislative recommendations. Recommendations were directed towards the Office of the Attorney General, the Governor, the Kentucky General Assembly, the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts, County and Commonwealth’s Attorneys, Kentucky Claims Commission, Office of Grants Management, the Department of Criminal Justice Training, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the Department of Health, K-12 Schools, Colleges and Universities, Youth Serving Organizations, the Media, Public Officials and Workplaces.
Overview

This report summarizes the second year of the inaugural Survivors Council, documents the activities and development of materials and includes recommendations for the Commonwealth of Kentucky from the Council.

Formation of Survivors Council

The Office of Victims of Crime defines a victim-centered approach as one which seeks to minimize re-traumatization associated with the criminal justice process by:

- providing the support of victim advocates and service providers;
- empowering survivors as engaged participants in the process;
- providing survivors an opportunity to play a role in seeing their offenders brought to justice.

To achieve this goal of empowering survivors as “engaged participants in the process, the Office of the Attorney General formed the Survivors Council in January 2017. The Council is the first of its kind in any Office of Attorney General nationwide, and one of the only government hosted groups of Survivor leaders apart from the White House Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.

The purpose of the Survivors Council is:

- To advise and assist the Office of the Attorney General on matters related to victims of crime, including but not limited to:
  - awareness initiatives;
  - training efforts; and
  - publications, policy and legislative initiatives
- To ensure that these efforts are victim-centered, effective and responsive to the needs of diverse victims

https://ag.ky.gov/justice-for-victims/survivors-council

Structure of the Council

The Council was formed through an application and nomination process shared with victim service agencies and posted in media in the Fall of 2016. The Council sought individuals who would be interested in public speaking, training, public policy, development of materials, leadership development and other activities. Council members were chosen based on their background and commitment and to ensure a diverse representation of voices from urban and rural parts of the state, spanning a wide range of crimes and life experiences.
The following individuals comprise the 2017-2018 Council:

- Jaydee Graham
- Ekaterina Estes
- Michelle Kuiper
- Angelina Alcott
- Melissa Buchanan
- Amy Leenerts
- Tonya Lindsey
- Bradford McClain
- Angela Renfro
- Tammy Quetot
- Meghan Wright
- Tammy Adams
- Michelle Kelty
- Paige Sutkamp
- Brittney Thomas
- Beverly Weinhold
- Jennifer Lynn Williams
- Theresa Martinez
- Lisa Murray
- Clorissa Novak
- Donna Pollard

These individuals are survivors of victims of homicide, mass shooting, DUI, gun violence, felony assault, stalking, revenge porn, human trafficking, campus rape, sexual assault, child abuse, domestic violence and other serious offenses. They have transformed their experiences of trauma and committed to ensuring that victims of similar types of crime receive a voice in the criminal justice process, meaningful assistance, and compassionate treatment.

Members serve a two-year term and commit to attending four meetings a year in the capitol, Frankfort. The Council was co-chaired by the Director of the Office of Victims Advocacy, Gretchen Hunt, and Michelle Kuiper, Survivors Council member.

**ACTIVITIES OF THE SURVIVORS COUNCIL**

During 2018, the Survivors Council held four regularly scheduled Council meetings and a fifth “check in meeting” in Frankfort at the Office of the Attorney General. During these meetings, the Council discussed grants, legislative initiatives, awareness events, training initiatives, development of the Victim Guide as well as suggestions for how to enhance further Survivors Councils to be more trauma-informed and responsive to the needs of survivors.
Victim/Survivor Guide Sub-Committee: The Victim/Survivor Guide subcommittee was formed to assist the Office of Victims Advocacy in developing a comprehensive, trauma informed guide to help crime victims navigate the criminal and civil legal systems, with linkages to other governmental and community agencies. Currently, there is no single guide or website for crime victims to know their rights and understand how the multiple government agencies (Office of Victims Advocacy, Corrections Victim Services, Kentucky Claims Commission and others) interact and provide services to victims of crime. Most police departments lack victim advocates, so many crime victims do not receive information about their rights or options or services until the case proceeds to prosecution. In addition, not all prosecutors’ offices have victim advocates on staff. The Victim/Survivor Guide Committee worked closely with the KYOAG to develop the first Victim Guide, published in January 2019 and available at: https://ag.ky.gov/publications/AG%20Publications/Crime-Victims-Information-Guide.pdf. The Guide provides a map for victims of crime from the time of the event all the way to post-trial, with resources throughout the guide.

Legislative Subcommittee: The Initiatives Branch of the Office of the Attorney General provided a briefing on the legislative process to the Legislative subcommittee. Further activities of the legislative subcommittee, including work on legislation and Survivor Day at the Capitol, are covered in more detail below.

Training and Education Subcommitee: The Council developed a listing of trainings Council members can provide to the public, available on the website. In addition, the Council created Survivors Quilt squares exhibit for Victims Rights Day 2018 to increase awareness of the voices of survivors of crime.
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

- **Survivors Day at Capitol and Release of 2018 Report with Recommendations:** On January 17th, 2018, Survivors Council members met for the first Advocacy/Lobbying day at the Capitol. They began the day with a press conference outlining their report and recommendations (including legislative recommendations), had a legislative briefing with staff from the KYOAG Initiatives Branch, attended committee meetings, met with legislators and were recognized on the House floor.

**Legislative advocacy:** Survivors Council members were successful in drafting legislation, providing testimony, and advocating for passage of several victim-centered bills during the 2018 KY General Assembly, including the following bills:

- **Marsy’s Law:** Survivors Council members including Melissa Buchanan, Tonya Lindsey and Tammy Adams participated in awareness videos, testimony and other efforts that led to a successful passage of a bill to further a constitutional amendment for victims’ rights. The ballot measure, which received a majority of votes in November 2018, is still pending in the courts.  

- **Child Marriage Bill:** Survivors Council member Donna Pollard, survivor of child marriage, worked with national and local advocacy groups to pass a bill establishing a minimum age of marriage (17) and creating protections for those 17 year olds those seeking to marry.  
- **Changing the Definition of Rape/Sodomy:** Survivors Council Co-Chair Michelle Kuiper and member Katya Estes worked with advocacy groups to pass a bill to make Kentucky laws consistent with the FBI definition of rape, thereby increasing protections for victims of rape and sodomy.

**EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

During the second year of the Survivors Council, members assisted the Office of the Attorney General and the public in multiple training and awareness events. Outreach and education efforts are summarized below:

**AWARENESS:**

- **Victims Rights Day 2018:** Three council members were the main speakers at the Attorney General’s Victims Rights Day event, and a council member led the opening prayer. Council members contributed artwork and quilt squares for an art exhibit that was displayed in the Capitol rotunda for Victims Rights Day. The artwork was made into an awareness poster that was distributed to advocates and prosecutors’ offices statewide.
TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

- **Victim Assistance Conference**: Five council members presented workshops at the annual Victim Assistance Conference in June 2018 on mass violence, homicide, and child sexual abuse to approximately 250 prosecutor and law enforcement based advocates.

- **Kentucky Victim Assistance Academy Steering Committee**: Survivors Council Member (representing crime of gun violence/homicide) served on the Steering committee with the Office of Victims Advocacy for Kentucky Victim Assistance Academy. A Survivors Council member also attended the KVAA in September 2018.
• **University Lecture**: A Survivors Council member co-presented with the Director of the Office of Victims Advocacy to a Victimology Class at the University of Kentucky to discuss mass violence and the role of the Survivors Council.

• **Faith Communities**: Survivors Council member convened a meeting between faith leaders and representative of the Office of Victims Advocacy to discuss approaches to sexual violence in faith communities.

• **Child Marriage Panel**: Survivors Council Member and Office of Victims Advocacy Director spoke on panel with legislators on child/forced marriage at the University of Louisville.

Representative Joni Jenkins and Survivors Council Member and Survivor of Child Marriage, Donna Pollard
PRESS

- Survivors Council member quoted in announcement of Domestic and Interpersonal Violence Policy Manual for Prosecutors:


AWARDS

- Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month Award: The Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs presented the Innovative Program Award to Attorney General Beshear and the Survivors Council.
• **Marsy’s Law of Kentucky** awarded Attorney General Beshear and the Survivors Council an award for advocacy in Spring 2018.

• **National Crime Victims Service Award** : Co-Chair Michelle Kuiper received the award from the Office of Victims of Crime, in part for her work on the Survivors Council: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxV2hLMiUeA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxV2hLMiUeA)
CONSULTATION WITH STATE AGENCIES

- **KYOAG Sexual Assault Kit Initiative:** Survivors Council members met with Dr. Brad Campbell of the University of Louisville, principal researcher on the Kentucky Sexual Assault Kit Backlog research initiative and members of the KY SAKI Team to discuss victim notification and response.

- **Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts:** Survivors Council members met with representatives from the KY Auditor of Public Accounts to discuss their desire for a follow up report to the 2015 Report on Untested Sexual Assault Kits, with a particular focus on college campuses and kits that were destroyed.

- **Marshall County School Shooting:** Survivors Council member and survivor of mass violence, Brittney Thomas, assisted the Office of Victims Advocacy in its response to victims in Marshall County following the school shooting. Ms. Thomas also consulted with national groups immediately following the tragedy. Due to her work with KYAOOG and national groups, in 2018, she was chosen to serve as a member of the Survivors and Providers Stakeholder Forum of the newly formed National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center, funded by the Office of Victims of Crime.
CONSULTATION WITH NATIONAL VICTIM ADVOCATE

In Summer of 2019, members of the Survivors Council along with staff from the Office of Victims Advocacy met with national victim advocate Anne Seymour to participate in her national research on survivor perspectives. Ms. Seymour conducted a focus group/roundtable with the survivors on themes of fairness, dignity and respect as they relate to victims rights. Publication of the interviews and research will be forthcoming.
RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of their work in 2018, the Council individually and collectively developed the following recommendations to improve justice and healing for victims of crime in Kentucky.

* Many of the recommendations have been repeated from the first year report. Those that have been completed or are in progress are highlighted in yellow.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Office of the Attorney General**:

- Ensure that training, including the Victim Assistance Conference is victim-centered and provides advocates with practical training to best serve victims. Ensure that there is not a “one size fits all” approach to victim advocacy, with special attention to the needs of all victims of crime.

- Host a one-day conference 2-3 times a year in different counties and communities to provide the education and tools developed from the Survivors Council to victims of crimes and their families.

- Conduct more training and education for marginalized communities about what their rights are and who can better serve them and their rights as a citizen of Kentucky.
• Expand the availability of information concerning investigation and criminal justice proceedings for victims of crime.

• Engage with the Survivors Council in a discussion of trauma informed principles and help develop plan for state agencies to become trauma informed.

• Together with Survivors Council members, meet with a handful of diverse ecumenical clergy to build relationships toward collaborating on a conference to train faith leaders regarding domestic violence and sexual abuse in 2018.

• Identify local community leaders and work with them to improve victim services in the outlying regions.

• Develop literature for minors seeking emancipation and/or marriage that explains their legal rights as well as provides resource information should they find themselves in need of services.

• Provide training for prosecutors on stalking.

• Expand efforts on sexual assault and Title IX to include K-12 schools.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Office of the Governor**:  

• Support a Budget that adequately funds law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, and victim services with a particular focus on underserved communities and evidence based solutions to address crime and protect victims. Ensure that there is a funded victim advocate in every prosecutor’s office in Kentucky. Fund crisis response teams to respond to victims immediately following the crime. Victims often lack an advocate until their case goes to court and many, including survivors of homicide, lack any advocacy following the crime. Support funding for trauma informed training for first responders. Support funding for prevention programs. Fund training and programs of survivor/peer advocates to assist victims of crime. Fund primary prevention of violence through more in home support for parents and establishing “pit stops,” centers where families can go for support.

• Fund the Survivors Council of the Office of the Attorney General to expand its efforts, including training, outreach and resource development.

• Create a Crime Victims Experience Commission/Alliance/ Advisory to investigate and report the experiences of Kentucky crime victims (much like the President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime, established in 1982).
The Survivors Council recommends that the **Kentucky General Assembly**: 

- Pass a Budget that adequately funds law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, and victim services with a particular focus on underserved communities and evidence-based solutions to address crime and protect victims. Ensure that there is a funded victim advocate in every prosecutor’s office in Kentucky. Fund crisis response teams to respond to victims immediately following the crime. Victims often lack an advocate until their case goes to court and many, including survivors of homicide, lack any advocacy following the crime. Support funding for trauma informed training for first responders. Support funding for prevention programs. Fund training and programs of survivor/peer advocates to assist victims of crime. Fund primary prevention of violence through more in home support for parents and establishing “pit stops,” centers where families can go for support.

- Pass Senate Bill 3 and Senate Bill 30, known as “Marsy’s Law” to create a constitutional amendment for crime victims’ rights.

- Pass Senate Bill 48, addressing the current statutes on child marriage. *If we want to stop the cycles of poverty, domestic violence and sexual abuses, this is a first step towards victory over those human rights violations.* Donna Pollard, Survivors Council Member

- Pass legislation (“Safe Time Act”) to require employers to provide paid time off for hours taken in connection with family violence, sexual offenses, stalking, human trafficking and other crimes (including but not limited to court appearances and counseling).

- Pass DNA at Felony Arrest legislation to require swabbing for a DNA profile at time of felony arrest instead of conviction. This will allow suspects’ DNA profiles to be entered into CODIS as an investigatory tool to match the right perpetrators, exonerate the innocent, remove offenders from the streets before they escalate in their crimes, and hopefully save lives from possibly ever being offended in the first place.

- Pass an updated Legal Definition of Rape – Ensure that Kentucky’s definition of rape matches federal definition of rape.

- Fund Long-term STD Treatment For Victims of Rape – Amend Kentucky law to require funding for treatment of long term STDs contracted as a result of rape or sexual assault.

- Pass legislation making revenge porn/image exploitation, or the non-consensual sharing of photos/videos a crime under Kentucky law.

- Pass legislation creating protective order for victims of other serious crime, including but not limited to revenge porn, felony assault and murder.

- Adopt universal requirements for sex education for middle and high school students to include consent and interpersonal violence.
• Pass legislation remove clergy penitent privilege in suspicion/allegations of child abuse. Clarify that church officials are mandatory reporters of child abuse and should not substitute internal investigations for reports and cooperation with state authorities charged with investigating child abuse.

• Pass legislation that prohibits domestic violence misdemeanants from buying or owning firearms, prohibit subjects of domestic violence restraining orders from buying or owning firearms, require domestic violence misdemeanants to dispose of firearms in their possession and require subjects of domestic violence restraining orders to dispose of firearms in their possession.

• Pass legislation to mandate child abuse prevention education (such as Darkness to Light) for all teachers, firefighters, police officers, EMTs, Paramedics, hospital staff, daycare workers, and anyone else who comes into contact with children regularly.

• Address the drug epidemic by effectively funding efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. “Our leaders must begin to look at Child Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency, along with the susceptibility of our population to heroin and other drugs, not as separate issues, but in a cause/effect relationship.” —Survivors Council Member Brad McClain

• Increase pay and set limits on caseloads for child welfare workers.

• Pass legislation to clarify that the testimony of young children (under 12) shall be admissible in court in order to enhance the prosecution of child abuse in Kentucky.

• Expand CASA program and funding.

• Adopt zero tolerance policies for sexual harassment, including those individuals who have settled sexual harassment claims.

The Survivors Council recommends that the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts:

• Provide an updated report on the Rape Kit Backlog, including more detailed information about handling of rape kits by campus police departments.

The Survivors Council recommends that County and Commonwealths Attorneys:

• Create victim assistance programs in each office.

• Create a network of policy, training and technical assistance in coordination with members of the Survivors Council
The Survivors Council recommends that the **Kentucky Claims Commission**:

- Fund crime scene cleanup as an allowable expense. Victims of many crimes, most notably homicide victims, cannot currently seek crime victim compensation for cleaning up the scene of the crime, adding to the trauma of the crime.

- Fund relocation as an allowable expense to allow crime victims to seek safety and healing.

- Require trauma informed training for Kentucky Claims Commission staff and board members.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Office of Grants Management**:

- Fund trauma informed training, services to underserved victims including rural survivors and homicide victims, Survivors Council leadership training, fund training and programs of survivor/peer advocates to assist victims and increase funding for a focus on internet based crimes.

- Fund more training and education for marginalized communities about what their rights are and who can better serve them and their rights as a citizen of Kentucky.

- Fund community based groups to prevent violence since they are on the ground and best understand the community.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Department of Criminal Justice Training**:

- Expand training for school resource officers to include trauma informed care.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Cabinet for Health and Family Services**:

- Provide resources for non-offending parents to help navigate the court and child welfare system.

- Clarify or eliminate the term “unsubstantiated.” This is a term used by social workers when abuse is not found, but also when the child is too young to make a statement, or did not have physical injuries, or any number of factors that indicate abuse, but are dismissed. In many of these cases, abuse did indeed occur but could not be prosecuted. Courts, law enforcement, and could impact future investigations.

- Child abuse cases should be handled in a multidisciplinary team model, and social workers should have cross training with medical and law enforcement professionals.
Social workers and multidisciplinary partner agencies should be required to meet face to face to discuss cases.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Department of Public Health:**

- Mandate screening for victimization and trauma in HANDS and WIC program intake.

The Survivors Council recommends that **K-12 schools in Kentucky:**

- Train and create more trauma-informed schools, including consulting with Survivors Council members to create trauma informed environments.
- Conduct more training in schools for children and staff on the definition of rape and sexual violence, safe touch, boundaries, consent and bystander intervention.
- Provide information to students about what their rights are if they are victims of a crime and information to parents, so they may effectively help their child or loved one.
- Provide awareness and education for school personnel on how to recognize the signs of someone that has been victimized by crime

The Survivors Council recommends that **Kentucky Colleges and Universities:**

- Educate the public and students in schools/universities about sexual assault, including Title IX, potential sanctions, and victim rights.
- Explore restorative justice programs on campus for those victims who chose not to go through the criminal process.
- Restrict admission of those convicted or found responsible on another campus for violent crime, including but not limited to sexual assault, intimate partner violence and stalking.

The Survivors Council recommends that **Youth Serving Organizations:**

- Adopt Boundary precautions, including but not limited to the following:
  - **Transporting clients:**
    - Use camera in vehicles and develop process for reviewing recorded material
    - Material should not just be reviewed after a complaint is made- it is common for reports of inappropriate behaviors to go unreported for many years after the occurrence. An established process for reviewing the material needs to be implemented for the protection of staff and clients
    - Consider utilizing audio recording or an audio recording camera that can be clipped to the staff member’s clothing for use when not in the automobile
Training:
- Train staff on how to recognize signs of grooming amongst colleagues and how to report suspicious behaviors
- Train staff on how to handle clients who may attempt to initiate the crossing of boundaries themselves
- Train staff on how to respond to a client who alleges inappropriate interactions-
  - Consider how the client will be kept a safe distance from the accused during and after the investigation, if the severity of the complaint has not warranted leave
  - Develop talking points for assisting the staff (other than the accused) in helping a client talk through their alleged experience
  - Develop re-integration training for the accused when the allegations are deemed unsubstantiated and they come back to work (especially when they must continue interacting with the client that alleged the misconduct)

Policy Enhancements:
- Develop a database to be shared amongst direct service providers where these accusations could be securely stored (regardless of the outcome of the investigation)
- Require organizations providing direct services to reference this database during hiring process as a complement to criminal background checks
- Revisit timeliness of reporting substantiated claims to the direct service provider

The Survivors Council recommends that the Media:

- Receive training and awareness on trauma, how to report crimes and interview people victimized by crime.

- When responding to Mass Shootings:
  - No notoriety for the shooter. Avoid using images/pictures and the name of the shooter, especially in follow-up stories and especially not beside the photo of a victim and/or survivor. The only exception for showing the picture and name would be if police are still looking for the shooter and the public's safety is at risk. Instead, report on the victims and survivors. Focus on them instead of the shooter.
  - Do not sensationalize the incident or the shooter. Doing so only and gives the next shooter a number of deaths to exceed (ex: do not say "deadliest shooting since Sandy Hook")
  - Avoid stigmatizing the community where the event takes place (ex. Columbine is actually a flower...but most everyone associates it as the location of the school shooting. Instead of saying "The Columbine shooting" say instead, the shooting that happened at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO.)
  - Exercise the principal of "do no harm." Victims and Survivors have the right to decline to be photographed, interviewed and/or filmed. Instead give them a card with your contact information to call you should they decide to speak about their
experience. If you have taken their photograph, ask for permission to use it. Remember, you will be there long after the national media is gone and you want to keep the trust of your local community!

- After a mass shooting tragedy, the story does not need added sensation or to be dramatized more. It's already dramatic enough. Rely on good solid facts and check your sources thoroughly, including those claiming to be eye witnesses or friends of the victims and/or shooter.
- Do not show graphic images. Instead report on where people can go to get help and/or how the community can help the survivors and their families
- Avoid speculating about why the shooter committed the crime. Stick to the facts. Mass shootings often happen for a variety of reasons and are very complex. There is no one answer or motive that will explain why this happened.
- Do not "swarm" people at the scene where the shooting happened. They are in shock and do not need to be giving interviews. They need time to process what has just happened before speaking to the media. Provide them a contact card to call you when/if they are ready to share their story
- Plan ahead. Have a plan and get trauma-informed training for your news media crew on how to report on mass shootings BEFORE they happen.
- When interviewing victims/survivors, allow them as much control as possible. Let them choose when and where they are interviewed and what questions they will answer.

The Survivors Council recommends that **Public Officials:**

- Public officials who serve this Commonwealth in state and local government should be required to receive gender equity training. This training should then be replicated in other agencies with an emphasis on agencies that serve the most vulnerable populations. KY ranks 27th out of our nation’s 50 states in gender equality ([https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-women-equality/5835/](https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-women-equality/5835/)), 1 in 9 adult women here have been “forcibly raped” and almost 1 in 2 women (47%) have been sexually victimized at some point in their lives and most offenders are male (CDC, 2010 as reported by [http://bluegrassrapecrisis.org/sexual-violence-statistics/](http://bluegrassrapecrisis.org/sexual-violence-statistics/)).

  “Because these types of violence are gender related and power based we must move prevention beyond awareness raising to conversations and training that targets hierarchical attitudes and social norms.” —Rev. Beverly Weinhold, Survivors Council Member

The Survivors Council recommends that **Workplaces:**

- Provide awareness and education for those in the workplace on how to recognize the signs of someone that has been victimized by crime
CONCLUSION

At the end of the two-year term, many Council members expressed that being on the Council enhanced their experience of healing and that being able to work together across different crimes has strengthened their advocacy and leadership skills. In the words of several survivors:

“It wasn’t until I realized I couldn’t handle my experience or trauma by myself that I began to heal. Sharing my story released the agonizing and painful energy that lived inside of me!”

—Tammy Quetot, survivor of stalking

“Serving on the Survivor’s Counsel for two years has been transformative in my life. Noticed by the AG’s office and sitting in solidarity with survivors, gave me agency to accept my abuse and see my self-worth deepening my dignity. No longer locked in a victim mentality, I’ve gained confidence to be a whole self without secrets. Becoming truer to myself and closer to God, my vocation as a trauma informed psychotherapist has taken off. This transformative moment serving with the Survivors Council has given tools and honed skills that bring healing to victims who seek out my services. Thank you for allowing me to contribute to this. It’s only the beginning for me. This is just my starting point.”

—Rev. Dr. Beverly Weinhold, survivor of clergy abuse

Several survivors sat down at the end of the Council to record their reflections on the Council, available for viewing here: https://youtu.be/969P_TBrRi8

Tonya Lindsey and Michelle Buchanan, Survivors of Homicide
The inaugural Survivors Council has had a huge impact on the Office of the Attorney General, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and indeed the entire nation as the first of its kind in any Attorney General office. Council members have worked to raise awareness, create publications, training and laws that are victim-centered across multiple crimes and improving the lives of countless Kentuckians. The Council has helped to empower advocates who will continue to assist the public, non-profits and government agencies to create policies, training, legislation and initiatives that are trauma-informed and victim centered. We are very thankful for the dedication, commitment and passion demonstrated by this first Council, which has created a path for future Councils to continue advocating for a more victim-centered, trauma-informed community.

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For more information about the Survivors Council, or to request training or consultation with the members of the Council, visit https://ag.ky.gov/justice-for-victims/survivors-council or contact Gretchen Hunt, Director, Office of Victims Advocacy at Gretchen.Hunt@ky.gov.