May 27, 2012

To: Speaker Michael J. Madigan
House Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie
Members, Public Safety Appropriations Committee

From: Barbara Shaw, IVPA

It has come to my attention that the House Public Safety Committee may be recommending that funding for the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative(NRI) be moved from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority (IVPA) to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), and that the Auditor General conduct a special audit of the NRI program in FY 11 and FY 12.

I have also heard that these actions are based on concerns that IVPA did not provide adequate information to the Committee and that there is confusion about how the communities and agencies were selected for funding. This letter seeks to address these points:

Provision of Information: In addition to the significant data available in the ISLs, IVPA did submit five documents detailing:

- Award amounts for Lead Agencies and sub-agencies by program component community
- Service accomplishments for Year One by component, and
- The NRI Data and Evaluation Plan which specified how we are measuring program services and outcomes.

There were no subsequent requests for information. Additionally, I checked to see if the Committee wanted me to appear again to answer questions (the Chair had said he wanted me to appear again) and was told that I was not being asked to reappear before the Committee.

Selection of Communities and Agencies: The issue of how the communities and agencies were chosen was discussed at length at the House hearing. It was explained that:

- Communities were chosen using the list prepared for the Safety Net Works projects four years ago based on date related to poverty, violence levels;
- Lead Agencies were nominated by local elected officials and submitted applications and budgets that were vetted and approved by IVPA (some were turned down); and
- Sub-agencies were selected through an application process conducted by the Lead Agencies (using forms provided by IVPA) in consultation with required Advisory Committees, most of which included legislators. The recommended applications and budgets were then submitted to IVPA for final review and approval. Boilerplate subcontracts containing program and budget

requirements were provided by IVPA , with all final documents approved by IVPA before execution.

I also want to assure you that IVPA works very hard to implement strong accountability processes, which include careful application procedures, budget and subcontract reviews, quarterly program and fiscal reports, and annual close-out procedures. We have had exceptionally clean compliance audits throughout our 15 year history as an agency.

In general, the actions being contemplated seem disproportionate to the concerns being raised.

We remain open to providing whatever information is requested and hope that funds will continue to be appropriated to IVPA for this well-received, comprehensive, violence prevention program. We have formed successful partnerships with agencies in the twenty-three NRI communities and would like to continue working with them to prevent violence and provide youth with safe, constructive opportunities for growth and development.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Shaw
Director