



The Victims Fund Financial Assistance for Victims to Attend National Parole Board (NPB) Hearings

What is the Victims Fund – Financial Assistance for Victims to Attend NPB Hearings?

Over the past several years, the Government of Canada has worked to improve the experience of victims in the criminal justice system. One of the important entitlements of crime victims in Canada is the opportunity to attend hearings conducted by the National Parole Board (NPB). Victims may attend hearings as observers or to present a victim impact statement.

However, attending NPB hearings often involves travel and accommodation away from home. As of November 1, 2005, financial assistance will be available to registered victims who wish to attend hearings of the offender who harmed them. Funding assistance allows victims to participate more fully in the criminal justice system.

The Victims Fund is administered by the Department of Justice Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI).

Who may apply for financial assistance?

Victims may apply to the Department of Justice for travel funding assistance if they:

- are registered with Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) or the National Parole Board (NPB);
- have been approved to attend NPB hearings; and
- wish to attend a hearing related to the offender who harmed them, either to observe or to present a victim impact statement.

Victims must attend the hearing to receive financial assistance.





Which National Parole Board hearings are eligible?

Victims may apply for financial assistance to travel to any or all of the NPB hearings scheduled for the offender who harmed them.

Financial assistance is available in relation to hearings scheduled to be held on or after November 1, 2005. No funding is available for attendance at hearings set to proceed before that date.

What expenses are covered by the Victims Fund?

The Victims Fund can help cover the following expenses, to the limits indicated:

- travel costs, in accordance with Treasury Board, Government of Canada Travel Guidelines: gas mileage rates, air, bus or train travel at economy rates (receipts required);
- hotels, generally to a maximum of two nights at prevailing government business travel rates (receipts required);
- meals and incidentals, generally to a maximum of three days, in accordance with Treasury Board, Government of Canada Guidelines (currently approximately \$75 per day). "Incidentals" included in the daily rate are intended to cover such expenses as telephone calls and tips (no receipts required);
- cost of transportation (taxi, shuttle bus, ferry, other), if necessary, between airport, hotel and place of hearing (receipts required);
- airport surcharges (receipts required).

What expenses are not covered by the Victims Fund?

The Victims Fund does not cover:

- caregiver or babysitting expenses;
- lost wages;
- any other expenses not related to travel or accommodation (as described above).

What is the application process?

Step 1: Apply to Attend the NPB Hearing

Victims who wish to attend a hearing, whether to observe or to make a victim impact statement, must submit a written request to the office of the NPB in the region where the hearing will take place. Attendance application forms, a list of regional offices and other information about the parole process are available on the NPB Web site at: <http://www.npb-cnrc.gc.ca>.

Victims should apply to the NPB as soon as possible after receiving notice from CSC/NPB of potential hearing dates. A security screening must be conducted, as it is on all visitors before they are allowed into a penitentiary. The screening may take a number of months to process so victims are encouraged to apply early.

Step 2: Apply to the Department of Justice for Financial Assistance to Attend the Hearing

It is important to start the funding application process as far in advance of the scheduled hearing date as possible so financial assistance will be available when required. Applications may be submitted based on the most accurate information available; the information can be updated and finalized when the date and time of the hearing, as well as proposed travel arrangements and costs, are confirmed.

Victims who have applied to or been approved by the NPB to attend a hearing, and who seek financial assistance to travel to it, should apply to the Department of Justice for funding at least 30 days before the scheduled date of the hearing. Financial assistance application forms are available on the Policy Centre for Victim Issues Web site at: <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/voc/funding.html>

Where an application for funding is received less than 30 days before the scheduled hearing date, advance funding will likely not be possible. If the application is approved, eligible expenses will be reimbursed after the hearing when the Victims Fund Manager receives an expense claim with receipts. Confirmation by letter outlining the expenses to be covered will be sent to the applicant.



Where an application for funding is received after the hearing date, no retroactive financial assistance will be available unless the hearing has proceeded on short notice, or where the applicant who attended can show that he or she was not aware of the Victims Fund.

The Victims Fund application form may be obtained:

- by writing to the Victims Fund Manager, Programs Branch, Department of Justice, 284 Wellington Street, 6th Floor, Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8;
- by calling 1-866-544-1007;
- on-line at <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/voc/funding.html>

What if two or more victims travel together?

A separate application is required for each victim who seeks funding.

Where two or more victims travel together, one of them should apply for and claim all the expenses of shared transportation (gas mileage) and accommodation, and only his or her own meals and incidentals. The application form must clearly identify which expenses cover both the applicant and other victims. The other victims would apply for and claim their own meals and incidentals and their own transportation if not shared (individual air, bus or train fare).

What is the approval process?

Applications are reviewed for completeness and eligibility for funding. Decisions on the eligibility of an applicant and the amount of funding he or she may receive are made as soon as possible after receipt of a properly completed application. Applicants are advised by letter of the decision, including confirmation of the expenses that will be covered.

When will approved funding be received?

Where applications have been submitted at least 30 days before the hearing, every effort will be made to provide the decision letter as well as some funding to approved applicants, before the hearing date. Payment will generally be made in two instalments. The first instalment will represent about 70% of anticipated travel expenses and will be issued before the hearing, where possible. The second instalment will be paid after the hearing when the Victims Fund Manager has received the applicant's expense claim, supported by receipts, for actual expenses incurred.

Where an application is received less than 30 days before the scheduled hearing date, and is approved, eligible expenses will be reimbursed after the hearing when the Victims Fund Manager has received an expense claim with receipts.

Expense claims with receipts should be submitted to the Victims Fund Manager within 30 days of having attended the NPB hearing.

What happens if funding is provided and the hearing is postponed or cancelled?

Where the hearing does not proceed as scheduled and is not rescheduled within three months, those who had received financial assistance must return to the Victims Fund Manager all funds advanced, including any unused tickets that have been purchased.

Where recipients of funding have travelled to a scheduled hearing that does not proceed, and have incurred expenses as a result, they can still claim eligible expenses. If the funds advanced exceed what has been spent, the difference must be returned to the Victims Fund Manager.

All subsequent applications for financial assistance must provide details of travel funding assistance previously received.



Where is more information available?

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Questions and Answers can be found on-line at:
<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/voc/funding.html>

More information about the Victims Fund is available from:

Victims Fund Manager
Programs Branch
Department of Justice
284 Wellington Street, 6th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
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Telephone: 1-866-544-1007
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