



The Victims Fund

Emergency Financial Assistance for Canadians Victimized Abroad

According to statistics provided by the Consular Affairs Bureau at Foreign Affairs Canada, there were approximately 260 cases of violent crime against Canadians abroad in 2005–06 in such categories as murder, assault, kidnapping, child welfare and family distress.

Addressing the needs and concerns of victims of crime is a shared responsibility in Canada. Much of the responsibility for victim services (direct assistance, support and compensation) rests with the provinces and territories, as they are responsible for the administration of justice.

When Canadian citizens are victims of crime abroad, however, they may not meet the eligibility criteria for services and programs upon their return to Canada. Canadians are eligible to receive consular services while outside of Canada through the Department of Foreign Affairs Canada. However, a Canadian victimized abroad may need specialized services, especially upon return to Canada, which are not covered under the consular mandate.

What is the Victims Fund — Emergency Financial Assistance for Canadians Victimized Abroad?

As of April 1, 2007, emergency financial assistance is available to individual Canadians who are victims of specified serious violent crimes in a foreign jurisdiction for **emergency situations of undue hardship where no other source of financial assistance is available.** (The specified crimes are homicide, sexual assault, and aggravated assault or assault with serious personal violence, including against a child.)

This emergency financial assistance is available through the Victims Fund, which is administered by the Department of Justice Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI).





Who may apply for emergency financial assistance?

Any Canadian may apply to the Department of Justice for emergency financial assistance if he or she is:

- the victim of a violent crime in a foreign jurisdiction;
- a family member of a victim who is dead, ill or incapacitated due to their victimization in a foreign jurisdiction; or
- in the case of a child, a parent or the person responsible for the care and support of the child.

What types of crime does the assistance apply to?

Emergency financial assistance may be available in the case of the following crimes committed in a foreign jurisdiction:

- Homicide
- Sexual assault
- Aggravated assault
- Assault with serious personal violence, including against a child

What expenses are covered by the Victims Fund?

The Victims Fund may help cover the following expenses, where the victim has no other source of financial assistance, up to a maximum of \$5,000 (excluding travel costs):

- travel expenses to return to the country where the crime occurred in order to attend the preliminary hearing and/or the trial or equivalent process;
- travel expenses to return to the country where the crime occurred in order to testify at the preliminary hearing and/or trial if the host country is unwilling or unable to pay;
- travel expenses for a support person to be with a Canadian victimized abroad, during the immediate aftermath of the crime;

- expenses for a Canadian victim of crime to return to Canada;
- out-of-pocket expenses due to being a victim of a violent crime; and
- upon return to the victim's home province or territory, financial assistance for professional counselling that would otherwise be covered by the province or territory if the crime had occurred in that jurisdiction.

What expenses are not covered by the Victims Fund?

The Victims Fund does not cover:

- expenses covered by the applicant's medical insurance or travel insurance;
- lost wages;
- compensation costs;
- losses incurred due to the applicant's own criminal behaviour; and
- expenses incurred for crimes that took place before April 1, 2007.

How do you apply?

Step 1: Report the crime to the Canadian Embassy or Consulate

A Canadian who becomes a victim of a serious violent crime in a foreign jurisdiction should immediately attempt to report the crime to the local Canadian Embassy or Consulate. The primary concern of the Embassy or Consulate staff is the victim's personal and physical safety. Consular staff can assist with arranging help in a medical emergency; provide guidance on sources of information about local laws and regulations; contact next of kin, where authorized, in the event of an accident or death; and request that local authorities investigate suspicious circumstances in the event of an alleged or apparent crime or death.

Consular staff should notify the Victims Fund Manager that a victim may be applying for emergency financial assistance.



Step 2: Contact local police

If possible, a Canadian victimized abroad should contact local police to report the incident and obtain immediate help with safety concerns. It is a good idea to request a copy of the police report. The police report serves a number of purposes. It may provide the victim with contact information and it may be required for insurance purposes at a later date and if applying for compensation for criminal injuries.

A copy of the police report should accompany the Application for Emergency Financial Assistance from the Victims Fund.

Step 3: Apply to the Department of Justice for Emergency Financial Assistance

A Canadian victimized abroad may apply for funding by completing the Application Form for Emergency Financial Assistance for Canadians Victimized Abroad found on the Department of Justice Canada website at <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/voc/funding.html>.

The application form may also be obtained by writing to the
Victims Fund Manager
Programs Branch, Department of Justice
284 Wellington Street, 6th Floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

Email: Victims-Abroad-Fund-Manager@justice.gc.ca

Applications may be sent electronically, by fax or by mail.

What happens next?

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 a properly completed application is received. Applicants are advised by letter of the decision, including confirmation of the expenses that will be covered.

What if two or more Canadians travelling together are victimized?

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

You can find out more about the Victims Fund by writing to:

Victims Fund Manager
Programs Branch
Department of Justice
284 Wellington Street, 6th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H8

Fax: (613) 941-2269

Email: Victims-Abroad-Fund-Manager@justice.gc.ca



Notes

.....

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.