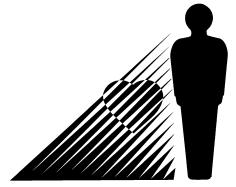


VICTIMS OF CRIME FINANCIAL BENEFITS PROGRAM



INFORMATION SHEET

The Financial Benefits Program assists direct victims of violent crime in Alberta by providing one-time payments based on the injuries they received. Victims make their own decisions on the use of the money depending on their own individual priorities. Victims usually do not need to submit anything else to the program except a completed application form.

We have tried to make the application form as simple as possible. However, if you need help, please contact the victim service program in your community or contact our office at **(780) 427-7217**. Our office hours are Monday to Friday from 8:15 to 4:30. (Alberta areas outside the Edmonton calling area, may call toll free by dialing 310-0000 and giving the operator our number.)

What happens after I send in the application?

Our staff will review and record the application in our database. This database helps us keep track of your application to ensure it gets handled as quickly and accurately as possible. We will then send you a letter to confirm that we received your application. We may also ask you for any information missed on the application. If you do not get this letter from us in two or three weeks, please contact our office.

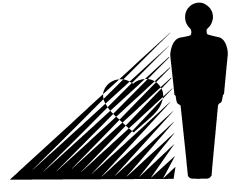
What's next?

Next, we confirm that you are eligible for benefits from our program. If you are eligible, we will then confirm your injuries and calculate the amount of benefits (see other side of this page for more information on our decision process). We request information from the police services, doctors, etc. that you identify on your application to make these decisions. However, we may not contact all information sources if we do not think it is needed to reach a decision. All decisions are made in writing. We do not give decision information out over the telephone as we can not confirm your identity. **Please tell us if you move** or we will have trouble contacting you.

How long does it take?

No two applications are the same. The average length of time to make a decision on applications is about four months but this can vary. Very serious or complex injuries may need time to stabilize. Delays may also occur if we have difficulty getting the medical information we need. We may make an interim payment if we can confirm some injury but need to wait to make a final decision.

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ELIGIBILITY

Please refer to the enclosed *Financial Benefits for Victims of Violent Crime* brochure. Eligibility information is under the heading “Who is eligible for financial benefits?”

Direct victim - Only direct victims are eligible. Witnesses to a crime or a direct victim’s family members are not eligible. A survivor of a homicide victim may apply for the death benefit. However, there is only one death benefit for a deceased victim and it may be split among eligible survivors or paid to one survivor only. The applicant is not necessarily the recipient of the death benefit (e.g. victim’s son may apply and the benefit paid to the victim’s widow).

Time Limit - There is a 2 year time limit from the date of the crime to apply. If you are applying more than two years after the crime, please provide a reason for the delay on the last page of the application. A time extension may be granted if there is enough evidence to show that the victim was not able to apply within the two years and the reason can be verified. Time extensions are not granted if a victim did not know about the program in time to apply.

Eligible offence - Eligible criminal code offences are listed in the regulations to the *Victims of Crime Act*. The list includes physical and sexual assaults, homicides and other violent offences. It does not include property or motor vehicle related offences.

Contributory behavior – Benefits can be reduced or denied if the victim contributed directly or indirectly to their own injuries. Contributory behavior may include consensual altercations, acts of retaliation or provocation, or victim involvement in illegal activity. Victims with a history of multiple convictions of violent or violence promoting offences (e.g. gang or terrorist activity, escaping custody, drug trafficking) may also be denied benefits, even if these crimes are not directly related to the crime causing injury.

CALCULATING BENEFITS

The program verifies the injuries received as a direct result of the crime by requesting medical reports and records from the hospitals, doctors, etc. The regulations to the *Victims of Crime Act* specify the amount of benefits to be paid (maximum of three injuries, maximum total award of \$110,000). If there are a number of related incidents (e.g. same victim and offender over a period of time), the injuries from all of the incidents may be assessed together.

Pre-existing medical condition – If an existing medical condition or injury was made worse by the crime, benefits are only awarded for the additional injury.

Treatment and diagnosis of injuries – Benefits are not paid for complications arising from a victim failing to seek and follow treatment. The victim may also be asked to see a health professional in order for the program to properly assess injuries.
