

Alberta Justice and Solicitor General

# VICTIMS SERVICES STATUS REPORT

2013-2014



## ***CONTACT US***

For additional information, contact  
Alberta Justice and Solicitor General at:

Victims Services  
Public Security Division  
Alberta Justice and Solicitor General  
10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building  
10365 – 97 Street NW  
Edmonton AB T5J 3W7

Phone: 780-427-3460 (local calls) or  
310-0000 (toll-free within Alberta) or through our website at:  
[www.victims.alberta.ca](http://www.victims.alberta.ca)

**Published November 2014**

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Message from Honorable Jonathan Denis, QC.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Status Report Highlights.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Alberta Victims of Crime Act.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Victimization Trends in Alberta.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Victim Services Programs.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Police-Based Victim Services Units.....	8
Community-Based Victim Programs .....	9
Newly Funded Community- Based Victim Programs .....	10
<b>What happens at a Police-based Victims Services Program.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Board Members.....	11
Police Liaison Members.....	12
Program Managers .....	12
Advocates/Volunteers .....	12
Administration.....	12
<b>The Importance of Volunteers for Victim Services Programs.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Victim Services Program Activity .....</b>	<b>13</b>
New Cases.....	13
Persons Assisted.....	14
Types of Assistance.....	15
<b>Victim Services and the 2013 Alberta Floods.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Victims of Crime Programs Committee .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Victims of Crime Financial Benefits Program .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Criminal Injuries Review Board .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Victims Services Initiatives .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Victims of Crime Protocol: What Victims Can Expect from the Criminal Justice System .....	26
Victim Impact Statement Program .....	26
Requesting Restitution Program.....	26
Victims Services Program Manager Training .....	26
Board Training .....	27
Aboriginal Awareness Training .....	27
CanTalk.....	27
Victims of Crime Website .....	28
<b>Funding Partnerships with the Policy Centre for Victims Issues.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Victim Advocate Training e-Learning Initiative .....	28
Aboriginal Outreach Specialist Initiative .....	29
Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women Initiative .....	30
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>31</b>



### **Message from Honorable Jonathan Denis, QC**

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I am pleased to present the Victims Services Status Report. In 2013-14, more than 71,647 Albertans were helped through various victim services programs, supported by Alberta Justice and Solicitor General.

Anyone can become a victim of crime. When a crime occurs that affects you, it is comforting to know that support is available in your community. These programs help Albertans overcome physical and emotional hardships caused by crime and begin to rebuild their lives.

Victim Services Units work with community groups, service organizations, law enforcement and all levels of government to develop, deliver and improve programs to support victims of crime in our province.

Victims deserve to be heard and I am pleased to continue collaborating with providers of victim programs and services to enhance access to services, improve organizational accountability and build capacity for effective service delivery.

Thank you to the police-based and community-based victim service organizations and their many advocates and volunteers. Your efforts and continued dedication to those impacted by crime is truly honourable.

Jonathan Denis, QC  
Minister

## Status Report Highlights

The Victims of Crime Status Report presents statistical data and trends concerning victims of crime, and the various actions being taken by the Government of Alberta in order to address victimization. Here are the highlights of the report for 2013-2014.

### *Victims of Crime*

---

- Victim services programs reported responding to 54,118 new cases of crime or tragedy; 45% of which involved assistance to victims of violent crime.
- Victim services programs reported providing services to 71,647 new clients in 2013-14, in which 85% were adults and 15% were under the age of 18.
- Approximately 2,895 volunteer advocates, board members, and special purpose volunteers contributed a total of 161,047 volunteer hours in 2013-14.
- The most frequently reported type of assistance in 2013-14 for new and ongoing cases was intervention which includes crisis response, death notification of next of kin, or practical assistance at a crime scene.

### *Police-based and Community-based Programs*

---

- Victim Services Units are victim-serving organizations that provide information, support and referrals for victims of crime throughout their involvement in the criminal justice system.
- As of March 31, 2013, Alberta had a network of 75 police-based victim service programs operating out of 137 service delivery areas. An additional 36 community based funding agreements with agencies and organizations that are in place to deliver specialized assistance and programming to address gaps for vulnerable victims.
- Police-based victim services units (RCMP, municipal police, and First Nations police) were awarded 54% (\$7.3 million) of the total grants approved in 2013-14
- Community-based programs (specialized programs that address gaps in service to vulnerable and unique victims of crime) were awarded 46% (\$6.1 million) of the total grants approved in 2013-14.

### *Financial Commitments<sup>1</sup>*

---

- Total financial expenditures for Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Victims Services in 2013-14 were \$33.8 million.
- The total of \$12.7 million was provided in grants to victims programs from the Victims of Crime Fund (VOCF), which includes \$8.5 million from previous year commitments.
- A total of \$12.8 million was provided to eligible victims of crime by the Financial Benefits Program during this period.
- In 2013-14, \$360,000 was provided for Restorative Justice Initiatives from the VOCF. Restorative Justice grants are awarded to organizations for initiatives that provide a non-adversarial and non-retributive approach to justice that emphasizes healing in victims, meaningful accountability of offenders, and the involvement of citizens in creating healthier and safer communities.
- In 2013-14, the Minister approved a grant of \$115,000 from the VOCF payable over two years to support flood relief to Foothills Regional Victim Services Association.

---

<sup>1</sup> Financial commitments based on actuals.

## Alberta Victims of Crime Act

The *Victims of Crime Act* (VOCA) was proclaimed on August 1, 1997 replacing the *Victims' Programs Assistance Act* and the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act* respectively. Under the new Act, all of the details outlining the rights and responsibilities of victims of crime were identified except for the specifics regarding the delivery of financial benefits to individual victims of crime; which were later proclaimed on November 1, 1997.

The Victims of Crime Fund (VOCF), is a regulated fund that is held and administered by the Minister of Finance, and operates under the authority of the *Victims of Crime Act*- Chapter V-3, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000. The Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security is responsible for the VOCF under the authority of the *Government Organization Act*, Statutes of Alberta. The VOCF is financed through a levy on provincial fines and federal convictions.

The purpose of the VOCF is to provide grants to organizations providing services to victims and to pay financial benefits to victims who have been injured as a result of a violent crime occurring in Alberta.

The VOCA defines several key principles for the treatment of victims of crime in Alberta. These include: victims should be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect; information should be provided to victims about the criminal justice system and how they can participate in these processes; and, the needs, concerns and diversity of victims should be considered in the development and delivery of programs and services.

In 2013-14, JSG, in partnership with the Ministry of Human Services and Alberta Health, proposed a newly created Counselling for Children (CFC) grant funding opportunity as a result of the Children's First Bill. The VOCA was amended to state that the VOCF can be used to provide grant funding to programs that benefit children who are victims of sexual exploitation or other criminal offences causing physical or mental harm. It was determined that a three year pilot project would be established with grant funding made available from the VOCF. These amendments will be reflected in funding opportunities provided in the 2014-15 fiscal year. The agencies receiving grants will be those that provide support to children and youth victims.

## Victimization Trends in Alberta

Victimization affects every one of us – it cuts across all socio-economic groups and all walks of life, impacting communities, men, women and children. Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) Victims Services collects information regarding victimization trends from the Victim Services Units (VSU) through quarterly reports which are required to be submitted as part of their grant funding arrangement.

The reports capture information on whether the offence was classified as violent criminal code offence, non-violent criminal code offence, non-criminal code offence, or no offence. This helps provide a picture of the victimization that people accessing the VSUs are

experiencing; however more in-depth information is needed in order to thoroughly understand the specific types of victimization bringing people to the doors of the VSUs (e.g. hate crimes, elder abuse, etc.).

JSG has recognized the need to develop a better picture of the types of victimization that people are experiencing. By having this understanding, programs and services can continue to evolve to support Albertans at the local and provincial levels.

In the interim, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), a branch of Statistics Canada, provides some trending analysis for victimization in Alberta, along with the other Canadian provinces and territories. CCJS compiles this information from data and statistics derived from the incident-based Uniform Crime Report, the General Social Survey (GSS), and the Census of the Population. The GSS and the Census are conducted on a five year cycle. As a result there is a lag in the data. Statistics Canada must collect, compile, and create reports before the data is released to the public.

The 2012 CCJS report provides most recent information available from Statistics Canada regarding victimization trends in Alberta and touch upon: firearms and violent crimes, police-reported hate crimes, sexual offences against children and youth, and police reported cybercrime. The highlights of these trends are provided below.

### **Firearms and Violent Crimes**

- Alberta reported the second highest rates of firearm-related homicides in Canada;
- Alberta ranked sixth in terms of firearm-related violent crime victimization among the provinces and territories;
- The top three offences where a firearm is most likely present are attempted murder, homicide and robberies;
- The majority of victims of firearm-related violent crimes and firearm-related homicide are male; and
- 60% of victims of firearm-related violent crime were victimized by a stranger, compared to 36% of victims of non-firearm related violent crimes.

JSG Victims Services increases awareness and understanding of violent crimes through the e-Learning victim advocates are provided. There are multiple e-Learning modules that address violent crime including assault, domestic violence, robbery, homicide and criminal harassment. Each module specifically addresses issues surrounding such types of victimization and advises advocates how best to assist these victims. In addition, JSG also offers support through the Financial Benefits Program which provides a monetary benefit to victims of violent crime as an acknowledgement of their victimization.

### **Police Reported Hate Crimes**

- Alberta had the fourth highest rate of police-reported hate crime among the provinces;
- 40% of hate crime victims were under the age of 25;
- 72% of hate crimes were directed towards males;



- In Canada, over half of police-reported hate crimes were motivated by race or ethnicity, with black populations being the most commonly targeted group;
- 30% of reported hate crimes were motivated by hatred for a religion or religious group; and
- Victims of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation were predominately male and 62% of victims identified the accused as a stranger.

In order to address hate crimes, JSG participates as a partner on the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, which strategically addresses hate and bias crimes and incidents in Alberta. The aim of the committee was to develop a province-wide framework to encourage a collaborative, integrated approach between police, the courts, and the community in preventing and responding to hate and bias motivated crime and incidents as well as enforcing hate crime laws. JSG Victims Services addresses hate crimes through the e-Learning victim advocates are provided. The e-Learning module on hate crimes highlights issues victims may face and how advocates can best support these victims. Lastly, all victim services units provide support to hate crime victims through the provision of services.

### **Sexual Offences against Children and Youth**

- Alberta recorded the third lowest rate of sexual offences against children and youth in Canada;
- Children and youth account for over half of all victims of police-reported sexual offences;
- Females make up the majority of child victims of sexual offences; and
- The majority of persons accused of a sexual offence against a child or a youth were known by the victim.

JSG Victims Services funds three Child Advocacy Centres that are programs dedicated to child and youth victims of sexual offences. The Child Advocacy Centres are interdisciplinary partnerships of child protection professionals that support child victims of abuse and their caregivers throughout the criminal justice process. These professionals are typically co-located under one roof, creating a child centered environment that minimizes trauma and fosters healing for the child. JSG Victims Services also provides funding to nine programs that provide support to children and youth sexual offence victims<sup>2</sup>. Lastly, all victim services units provide support to sexual offence victims through the provision of services.

### **Police Reported Cybercrime**

- The most common type of cybercrime is fraud with the majority of offenders being male;
- The majority of victims of sexual violations associated with cybercrime were below 18 years of age;
- Females make up the majority of victims of violent cybercrime, particularly when

---

<sup>2</sup> The following programs provide support to children and youth victims of sexual offences: Zebra Child Advocacy Centre, Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, SAFFRON Centre Ltd., Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse, Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre, Lloydminster Sexual Assault and Information Centre, P.A.C.E.-Caribou Child and Youth Centre Regional Sexual Assault Centre, Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre, and Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse.

- incidents involved sexual violation<sup>3</sup>;
- Almost three-quarters of victims of violent violations knew the accused, though victims of sexual violations were less likely to know the accused; and
- Approximately 1.75 million persons aged 15 and over, were victims of cyber bullying.

In order to address specific forms of cybercrime, the Alberta Integrated Child Exploitation (I.C.E) Unit is dedicated to child victimization and various forms of exploitation including internet crimes. The I.C.E. Unit is a Provincial Integrated Unit involving the RCMP, the Calgary Police Service, the Edmonton Police Service, the Lethbridge Regional Police Service and the Medicine Hat Police Service. There are two teams; a Northern Alberta Team covering all areas north of Wetaskiwin and a Southern Alberta Team covering all areas south of (and including) Wetaskiwin. Each unit targets the following offences: accessing, possession, distribution, importation, manufacturing of child pornography and any computer-related child sexual abuse, child luring over the internet, voyeurism involving victims under the age of 18 years, and child sex trade/tourism. JSG Victims Services ensures advocates are trained through the e-Learning program. The e-Learning module on cybercrime highlights issues victims may face and advises advocates how best to assist these victims.

## **Victim Services Programs**

Victims Services administers and funds a number of organizations that support victims of crime. The majority of supports to victims are delivered through police-based Victim Services Units (VSUs) and community-based Victim programs.

### **Police-Based Victim Services Units**

Police-based VSUs are independent, non-profit agencies that are governed by a local volunteer board of directors, and staffed by a paid victim services program manager. Police-based VSUs are usually co-located with local police services and are the first response, along with police, to a victim of crime or tragedy. They provide a continuum of services to victims from the time of first response by police, to the disposition of the case by the courts. Police-based VSUs are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to respond to crisis. Currently, there are 75 police-based programs operating out of 137 service delivery areas in Alberta. It is important to note that some VSUs are responsible for service to more than one detachment.

Through police-based VSUs, victims are provided with information about their case and criminal justice proceedings, emotional support and referrals to other community agencies (i.e. counseling, shelters, financial assistance, support groups). As well, they provide victims with information about completing victim impact statements, applying for financial benefits, requesting restitution, courtroom orientation, and courtroom accompaniment. Police-based VSUs may also work with victims of tragic situations wherein the police become involved,

---

<sup>3</sup> According to the CCJS, sexual violations include invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, luring a child, voyeurism, other sexual violations, and child pornography.

including motor vehicle accidents and next of kin notifications.

Police-based VSUs were awarded 54% (\$7.3 million) of the total grants approved in 2013-14. Of the 38 police-based VSUs awarded funding in 2013-14, 18 were approved for grants for up to a one-year term and 20 police-based programs were approved for multi-year grants.

### **Community-Based Victim Programs**

Community-based victim programs are designed to help reduce the barriers faced by different victim groups in the criminal justice system. They deliver specialized assistance and programming to address gaps in services for vulnerable victims like children, those subjected to human trafficking, domestic violence, new Canadians and loved ones of those who were victims of homicide. Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Victim Services (JSG) has 36 funding agreements with community-based programs which offer specialized services to vulnerable and unique victims of crime.

Community-based programs can be located as stand-alone programs, but more often are part of larger organizations that provide multiple services not necessarily related solely to victims of crime. Referrals for service are received by community-based programs from other community agencies, from the criminal justice system or from victims that approach these programs. All community-based programs provide victims with information about the criminal justice system, emotional support, and referrals to other community agencies.

Community-based programs work with victims at all levels of involvement within the criminal justice system. This may mean working with victims who are in the initial stages of reporting crimes to the police, or working with victims throughout the court, sentencing, and correctional processes. Please see page 20 about a community-based program and page 21 for a story about a victim that was supported by a community-based program.

Community-based programs were awarded 46% (\$6.1 million) of the total grants awarded in 2013-14. Of the 24 community-based VSUs awarded funding in 2013-14, 11 were approved for grants for up to a one-year term and 13 community-based programs were approved for multi-year funding. There were five newly funded community-based programs in 2013-14.

## **Newly Funded Community- Based Victim Programs**

### **Parkland and Area Response to Family Violence Committee**

The Parkland and Area Response to Family Violence Committee was formed in December 2009 after the Parkland Community Partnership identified family violence as a topic requiring attention in the Tri-Municipal Area. The group provides a Community/Justice-based model that has shown evidence-based success in dealing with family violence. The Committee has assembled a domestic violence court team who attends docket court, provides support to victims/clients whose partners have been criminally charged, conducts risk assessments and works with the Crown prosecutor and Alberta Human Services to develop safety strategies.

### **The Today Family Violence Help Centre**

The Today Family Violence Help Centre is a non-profit organization that offers a safe place for individuals victimized by family violence to access free, confidential, emotional and practical support. The Today Centre provides short-term support through risk assessment, safety planning, assessment of immediate needs, and supported referrals. Grant funding was provided for the Specialized Victim Support Program pilot project which is a community-based integrated response to support victims of family violence who identify as a sexual minority. The Program's mandate is to reduce the real and perceived barriers facing those affected by family violence; lessen the impact of crime and trauma and assist in the recovery process; provide information and support and reduce fear of participating in the criminal justice system; and provides referrals to services respectful of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender victims.

### **St. Paul and District Crisis Association**

St. Paul and District Crisis Association provides a safe, supportive environment while promoting community awareness to prevent family violence by empowering women and children in abusive situations. The Centre provides necessities including food, shelter, and emergency clothing. Additional services include 24-hour telephone counselling; emotional support and in-house counselling; a trained child-care worker to help support child(ren) through times of crisis; information and referrals to other agencies; and outreach services to help support women and children who have left the domestic violence situation. Grant funding has been provided for the association to hire a Domestic Violence (DV) Coordinator to work with victims of domestic violence from the time the police file is opened to the time the matter is resolved at trial. In partnership with St. Paul RCMP and the local Victim Service Unit, the DV Coordinator will become an integral part of a "Domestic Violence Response Team" designed to work in a client-centered support model.

### **Stop Abuse in Families Society (SAIF)**

Stop Abuse in Families Society (SAIF) provides services to clients who are experiencing abuse as well as educational prevention programs to schools and groups in the community. Grant funding was provided to the St. Albert Elder Abuse Program, which aims to provide coordinated community intervention plans for victims of elder abuse through a designated coordinator who will act as the central reporting, referral and service support contact for community agencies to support victims. The coordinator will provide court support and information, referrals and other supports to victims. In addition, the coordinator will provide community awareness and information opportunities to increase citizen reporting and support families affected by elder abuse.

### **The Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre**

The Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre is a collaborative and innovative one-stop, child-focused organization dedicated to minimizing the impact of physical and sexual child abuse. Funding allows the Centre to provide supports to children, youth and their families in Calgary and surrounding communities throughout the reporting, treatment and investigative process. Child Advocacy Centres, like the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre, are interdisciplinary partnerships of child protection professionals that support child victims of abuse and their caregivers throughout the criminal justice process. This includes disclosure of the abuse, investigation by police, participation in the court process and recovery of the victim and family members. These professionals are typically co-located under one roof, creating a child centered environment that minimizes trauma and fosters healing for the child. All children and youth, from birth to 18 years presenting with serious signs of physical and/or sexual abuse and needing assistance from a multi-disciplinary team are served at the Sheldon Kennedy Centre.

## **What happens at a Police-based Victims Services Program**

The activities of police-based victim serving organizations are delivered by six general classifications of people. The categories include: Board Members, RCMP Liaison Officers, Program Managers, Advocates, Administrators, and Volunteers. These roles are described in more detail below.

### **Board Members**

In most cases, victim serving organizations are run by a board of governors. The Board is the victim serving organizations' highest level of decision making and legal authority. The Board is legally and morally accountable for the health of the organization and the fulfillment of the organization's mission. The Board articulates and communicates the vision of the Victim Services Units (VSU) and focuses on strategic planning and direction. It also acts as a corporate body and directs the parameters of the work of the VSU. The Board is responsible for

following government mandated legislation (eg. Labour Relations Code, Criminal Code of Canada, Victims of Crime Act, etc.), while forming and regulating the direction of the VSU. The Board of Directors provides direction to the program through the program manager, and is responsible for strategic planning, budgeting and high level governance of the VSU.

### **Police Liaison Members**

The police liaison member is the first line of communication between the VSU and the police service. To ensure appropriate service to victims, the liaison encourages both police members and other support staff to participate in training opportunities that support increased knowledge of victim related topics and issues. Other duties the liaison carries out include providing letters of support to the VSU; participating in evaluations of the VSU; providing VSU personnel with orientation, information, and training regarding police operations, and policies and procedures. For programs working with the RCMP the liaison is an active RCMP member, a voting, non-executive member of the Board and a member of the VSU. Please see page 17 for a story about a RCMP liaison officer.

### **Program Managers**

The program manager oversees volunteer victim advocates who provide direct services to victims, the program manager may also be involved in providing direct service depending on the program capacity or the victim's needs. The VSU program manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the VSU, and is responsible for overseeing the volunteer advocates. Please see page 16 for a story about a program manager.

### **Advocates/Volunteers**

Volunteer victim advocates undergo a security clearance and complete the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) Victims Services online certification training, which prepares them to address a wide variety of crimes, victim needs and situations. They are first responders and go to crime scenes to provide crisis response to victims. Please see page 19 for a story about an advocate.

### **Administration**

Victim Services Units include administrative assistants who assist with the day-to-day running of the VSU. Activities include maintaining financial records and program statistics, conducting research for program initiatives and administration of the program and volunteers.

## **The Importance of Volunteers for Victim Services Programs**

Many of those working within victim service organizations volunteer their time in various capacities. Volunteers are crucial to the frontline delivery of services to victims. They consistently conduct their volunteer duties with professionalism, integrity, care and

compassion. Without these committed members of the community, assistance and services for victims of crime in Alberta could not exist.

Volunteers provide general assistance (information, intervention and referrals) to victims of crime. They also dedicate time to volunteer training, fundraising, court room support and raising community awareness. Board members are also volunteers who dedicate their time to provide oversight and strategic leadership to the programs.

For 2013-14, approximately 2,895 volunteer advocates, board members, and special purpose volunteers worked to support VSUs and contributed a total of 161,047 volunteer hours. While there was a decrease in total number of volunteers from 2012-13 to 2013-14, volunteers remain a crucial part of victim services.

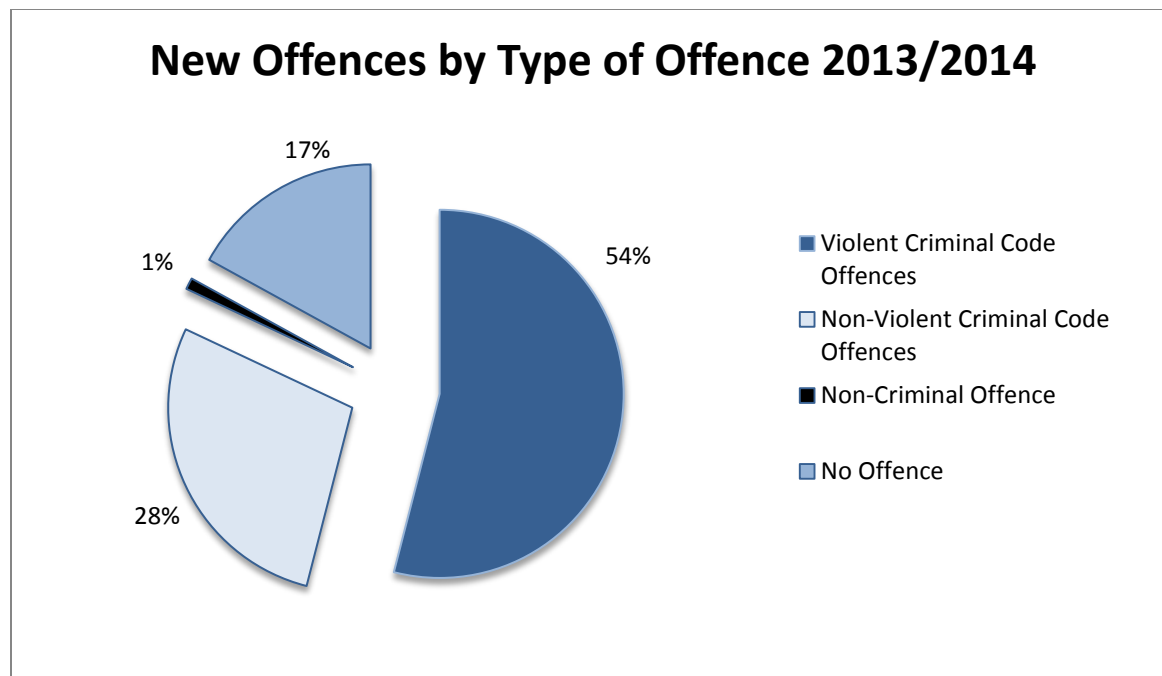
### **Victim Services Program Activity**

Police and community-based victim serving organizations see a number of victims come through their doors all across Alberta. Each victim has a unique experience, and the response to their needs depends on the types of crime for which they seek support. The Victim Services Units (VSUs) programs submit quarterly reports outlining their service delivery, which allows the ministry to determine the number of people requiring services and the types of assistance being provided.

#### **New Cases**

In 2013-14, VSUs reported 54,157 new cases, which marked an increase of approximately 3% compared to 52,707 new cases reported in 2012-13. A case may involve multiple victims and family members or friends affected by a criminal incident. A breakdown of data shows that police-based VSUs reported 42,344 new cases while community-based VSUs reported 11,813 new cases.

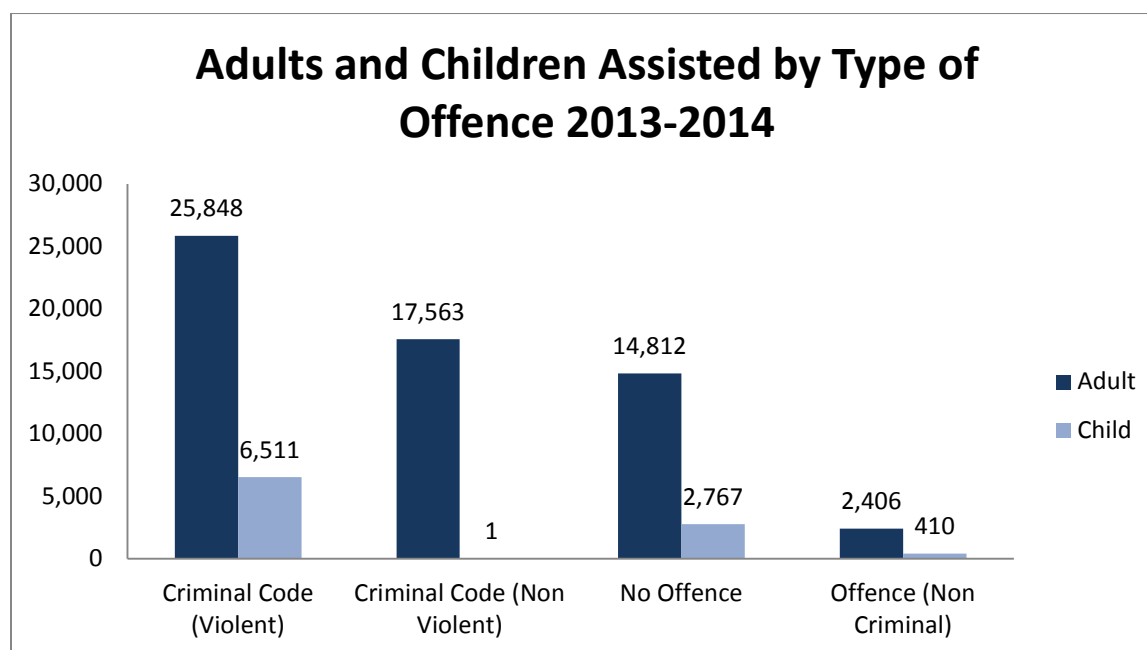
Of the 54,157 new cases reported in 2013-14, approximately 51% involved assisting victims of violent criminal code offences (**Figure 1**), while 28% assisted victims of non-violent criminal code offences.



**Figure 1**

### Persons Assisted

VSUs reported providing assistance to 71,647 people in 2013-14, an increase of approximately 1% compared to 2012-13. Of persons assisted during this period, 85% were adults and 15% were under the age of 18 (**Figure 2**). Police-based VSUs reported providing assistance to 59,090 people while community-based VSUs reported providing assistance to 12,557 people.



**Figure 2**



## **Types of Assistance**

The most frequently reported type of assistance in 2013-14, was intervention, including crisis response, death notification to next of kin, or practical assistance at a crime scene. Intervention was indicated 325,804 times for new and on-going cases, an increase of 13% compared to the previous year.

The second most frequently reported type of assistance is providing information. This type of assistance was provided for 148,914 instances. This marks an increase of 10% compared to 2012-13.

There were 39,734 referrals for new and on-going cases, and 16,043 instances of courtroom support.

## **Victim Services and the 2013 Alberta Floods**

On June 19, 2013, Southern Alberta was devastated by flooding. The floods were shocking due to the level of intensity and how quickly the disaster struck.

The area directly impacted by the flooding spans 55,000 square kilometres from Banff to Medicine Hat, resulting in evacuations of almost 100,000 people from 10,000 homes and saw considerable infrastructure damage that supports Albertans' quality of life including water treatment facilities, hospitals, schools, bridges, roads, businesses, and recreation sites. The scope and scale of Alberta's June 2013 floods resulted in the first-ever Provincial State of Emergency in Alberta.

A disaster like the June 2013 floods brought unique challenges for Victims Services. The response environment was complex, intense, demanding, chaotic and stressful. Therefore the widespread impact of the crisis and scope of victims needs could not have been anticipated.

Victim Services staff and volunteers met the unprecedented demand with passion and determination. Some Victim Services Units (VSUs) logged over 600 volunteer hours in a matter of days. Other VSUs provided door-to-door support while working with no phones or computers. When available, VSUs brought in extra advocates from surrounding communities to address high demand for service and support.

A number of advocates themselves were impacted by the floods. The following section highlights a number of individuals who were a part of the Victims Services flood response.



Kerri Wilkinson and Mike Holmes of the Holmes Group providing support to victims of the 2013 Alberta Floods

### **Spotlight on a Victim Services Program Manager**

#### *Passion Leads the Charge*

The floods had a considerable impact on the Town of High River. On June 20, 2013 residents were ordered to evacuate after the Highwood River flooded the town. A total of 13,000 people were displaced from their homes, and Foothills Regional Victim Services Association was there to assist. Foothills Regional Victim Services Association has four service delivery areas which are: High River, Nanton, Turner Valley and Okotoks.

Kerri Wilkinson, Program Manager of Foothills Regional Victim Services Association, was on the frontline with her advocates to assist with the unprecedented damage caused by the floods. The VSU was involved with the flood recovery efforts the very first day it occurred. The town had been on high alert and was evacuated quickly.

Kerri and her staff provided immediate support to victims from the High River RCMP detachment. VSU staff and volunteers answered calls regarding missing persons and pets, as well as providing information as to what was happening in town. When residents were permitted to return to High River to survey the damage to their homes, Foothills VSU along with agencies like the Red Cross and Alberta Health Services were tasked with registering residents and informing them as to whether or not they could go home. The VSU also provided immediate crisis support to anyone who needed it, completed multiple debriefings with RCMP members and checked on residents as requested.

Some of the issues that Foothills Regional Victim Services Association provided support for included gathering information, financial support for housing, emotional distress, keeping families together, facing unknowns (e.g. job security), replacing property (e.g. cars), and access to homes. A unique service provided to victims was government arranged bus tours of the town.

These tours took residents past areas of High River that remained inaccessible. Victim Services was present during these tours to provide support to residents who were witnessing the devastation of their homes.

Kerri and her staff also met a number of their own challenges. Two of the advocates were victims to the floods themselves, but remained a key part of the team and were on the ground every day they were needed. Communication among the different organizations was one of the biggest challenges at the beginning. As program manager, Kerri had to ensure that the services she and her staff provided were aligned with their mandate as victim services, and did not overlap with services other agencies were providing.

Along with the unprecedented damage, came unprecedented assistance. According to Kerri, the willingness to help in any capacity from other VSUs across the province was astounding. Fifty additional volunteers from six other VSUs arrived. Kerri stated that the amount of support provided and offered to her and her staff “reaffirmed who we are as victim services workers”. Kerri further stated that the willingness to help reflected the character of victim services as a provincial unit.



### **Spotlight on a Police Liaison Officer** *A Genuine Champion: Attending to Victims Needs*

Sergeant (Sgt.) Leanne Beattie is a RCMP liaison officer with the Okotoks RCMP detachment. She has been a dedicated liaison officer since she became a member sixteen years ago, and has been the liaison officer for Foothills Regional Victim Services Association for the past six-and-a-half years. Sgt. Beattie was one of many liaison officers actively involved with flood efforts in June 2013. After the floods hit, she was assigned to provide the necessary support to High River

RCMP detachment and Foothills Regional Victim Services Association.

Sgt. Beattie's main role was to provide support to the RCMP members of High River. The RCMP members had been actively involved in evacuating and supporting residents for the first four days after the flood hit. However, they were pulled from their duties after the first four days, in order to find their families and address their needs.

Sgt. Beattie gathered information for the RCMP members regarding such things as accessing employment benefits. She ensured that each member was contacted and was provided the support they needed, whether it be a simple telephone call or dealing with temporary housing. She faced some challenges such as tracking down members after they had dispersed from High River, ensuring members were provided with the most accurate information, and trying to figure out the type of support each member required as their needs varied drastically.

According to Sgt. Beattie there were a great number of unexpected positive outcomes. She stated that one of the most noteworthy was how the relationships changed and grew stronger among the local RCMP members, as they relied heavily on one another for support. Also, the relationships between the various detachments were positively impacted, as each detachment provided support to the High River detachment. A fund was set up through the RCMP Veterans Association, and donations were gathered from across the country to support the members and veterans impacted by the flood. Other good news stories came from the amount of support provided by the various services and volunteers who helped local members sort through their homes and begin to repair damage if possible.

Sgt. Beattie maintained her dual role as liaison officer and active member throughout the flood relief efforts. She was actively involved in services provided by Victims Services such as the flood impact tours given to residents. Sgt. Beattie's support to local members was maintained as long as each member felt necessary.





**Spotlight on a Volunteer Advocate**  
*A Devoted Heart: Meeting the Needs of Victims*

Marlyn is one of the many advocates who supported victims of the 2013 Alberta floods. Marlyn provided much needed support to the residents of High River. Marlyn has been an advocate for eight years with Foothills Regional Victim Services Association.

Marlyn's role as advocate during the floods had her assisting in multiple areas. One of her main duties was to register victims returning to town. She would inform them of the status of damage to their homes, went over the housing assessment with them and assisted with arranging temporary housing for those persons unable to go home. According to Marlyn, housing presented one of the greatest challenges for victims. Some victims were able to find temporary housing close to High River, while others were displaced to areas such as Calgary.

Marlyn also provided assistance to the Salvation Army and Red Cross who were handling clothing donations, food hamper collection and dispersion as well as providing cash cards for residents.

Issues victims faced included clothing, food, housing and lack of access to information. Many victims left their homes with the clothes on their backs and struggled daily to find food for their families. As no one knew how long it would take to repair the damage of the flood and get victims home, many were living day-to-day just trying to cope.

Marlyn stated that although residents were tired, frustrated and left without much, they showed great patience and compassion. Marlyn witnessed a number of times when residents who had been waiting in line for hours for services offered their place to elderly persons or persons with disabilities. Although there was much waiting to be done, residents showed great patience and understanding as they could see that people like Marlyn were doing the best they could with what little was available.

Marlyn held a unique position among the advocates as she herself was as much a victim of the floods as the people she was assisting. She often used this position to show residents that she understood what they were experiencing. Marlyn dedicated a significant amount of time to assisting victims during the floods and continues to provide support to many who have not returned home.



### **Spotlight on a Community - Based Program**

*A Community Changed*

Siksika Victim Services was one of the first agencies on scene when residents of Siksika First Nation were impacted by the floods. As part of the Siksika Crisis Response Team, Victim Services was called out to check on and transport flood victims to the Deerfoot Sportsplex which soon became the disaster relief centre for the community. Louella Amable was one of Victim Services staff who was present to assist and support residents of Siksika First Nation.

According to Louella, in a matter of days over 1,000 people were displaced from their homes. People of all ages were moved into the Deerfoot Sportsplex for temporary accommodation. Victim Services played an active role in arranging accommodation for residents, monitoring the relief centre call line, assisting Red Cross, attending and providing information during resident flood impact tours, and maintaining support for all victims.

Some residents of Siksika Nation were cut off completely from services when the Bow River flooded and severely damaged the only bridge connecting residents to town. The Aapaistaan Bridge was a main connection for community members and it was severely damaged when 60 meters of the Bow River embankment was washed away. Residents were forced to leave their homes and live in makeshift camps. Louella, along with her colleagues, assisted with evacuating residents as well as ensuring supplies such as food and water was given to those who could be evacuated immediately. Siksika residents were not the only people to be assisted in evacuating the flood area. Guests staying at a nearby golf resort were also rescued and brought to the relief centre for support and services.

Temporary communities were set up and multiple families were moved into the large trailers that made up these communities. The tight living quarters and increased stress due to the living situation created significant issues for residents. According to Louella, Victim Services noted an increase in family violence, depression and grief among residents in the temporary communities.

Although many residents did eventually move into new housing, a significant number of individuals and families are still living in these temporary communities.

Louella stated that although there were significant challenges brought on by the floods, there were a number of positive outcomes. Victim Services in conjunction with the Crisis Response Team are now better prepared for future disasters and major crisis as specific strategic plans have now been developed and put in place. Also the Dancing Deer Recovery Centre was established to address any ongoing issues flood victims may be dealing with. Lastly, the food bank that was originally set up for flood victims has now been established as an ongoing service for residents to access. According to Louella, Victim Services is now able to provide referrals to the food bank for victims in need.



### **A Victim's Story**

In June 2013, Joyce lost her home to the floods. Like many others from Siksika First Nation, her home and all her belongings were destroyed. At the time of the floods, Joyce's son, daughter and their children were living with her. So not only did Joyce lose everything, but so did her family.

Joyce and her family were relocated to the Deerfoot Sportsplex after her home was flooded. The Deerfoot Sportsplex was used as an evacuation center where residents could sleep, eat, shower and access resources. It was also used as a donation drop off location. Joyce described the building as being full of families and community members, who had lost their homes and all their personal belongings. With the support of Victim Services, Joyce and her family were relocated to one of the trailers provided to the community after a month-and-a-half of living in the Deerfoot Sportsplex.

According to Joyce, the most valuable assistance she received from Victim Services was their unconditional support. She stated that Victim Services made themselves available 24 hours and seven days a week to residents, and that they provided compassionate, empathy and services. Joyce stated that victim services were always checking in on her and her family to see how they

were doing. According to Joyce, as soon as the floods hit, Victim Services was there for her and the community, and she is grateful for all the support she received.

Joyce holds a unique perspective of the services provided by victim services during the floods. Joyce is an Administrative Assistant for SikSika Health Services, where Victim Services operates from, and was working for the community agency during the floods. She witnessed all of the time and effort that Victim Services staff put into supporting the community during the floods, and also found herself being supported by these same individuals. Joyce stated that she thanks them almost daily for their help, and sees that they are still assisting those community members dealing with the impact of the floods.

### **Victims of Crime Programs Committee**

Police and community-based victim service programs play a crucial role in providing much needed assistance to victims of crime. The Victim Services Units (VSUs) receive funding from the Victims of Crime Fund (VOCF) through a grants program.

The Victims of Crime Committee is responsible for evaluating grant applications submitted by eligible police- based and community-based VSUs, to support victims of crime. Once the evaluation is complete, the Committee submits their recommendations to the Minister, who makes the final decision regarding the grants that are awarded.

The Committee meets twice per year to evaluate grant applications submitted for the April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> application deadlines. Briefing summaries are prepared detailing items such as the program type, the program description, the services provided, community collaborations and partnerships, and the types of clients accessing the program. The briefing summaries are provided to each committee member in advance, allowing each to review the submissions before meeting as a group to discuss their recommendations.

Members of the Committee are appointed by the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. Current members of the Committee are:

- Tom Blair - Chair/Member at Large
- David Henderson – Member at Large
- Karen Walroth – Member at large
- Neil Wiberg – Member Representing Government
- Donnan McKenna – Member Representing Police - RCMP

In 2013-14, the Committee met in June and November to review the applications. In June 2013, the Committee recommended 21 grant applications. In November 2013, the Committee recommended 41 grants. Combined, the Committee recommended a total of 62 grants to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General in 2013-14. The total amount of grants to victims programs from the VOCF in 2013-14 was \$12.5 million<sup>4</sup> (for a full list of

---

<sup>4</sup> Which includes \$8.5 million from previous year commitments.



grants paid, please see the Appendix).

## Victims of Crime Financial Benefits Program

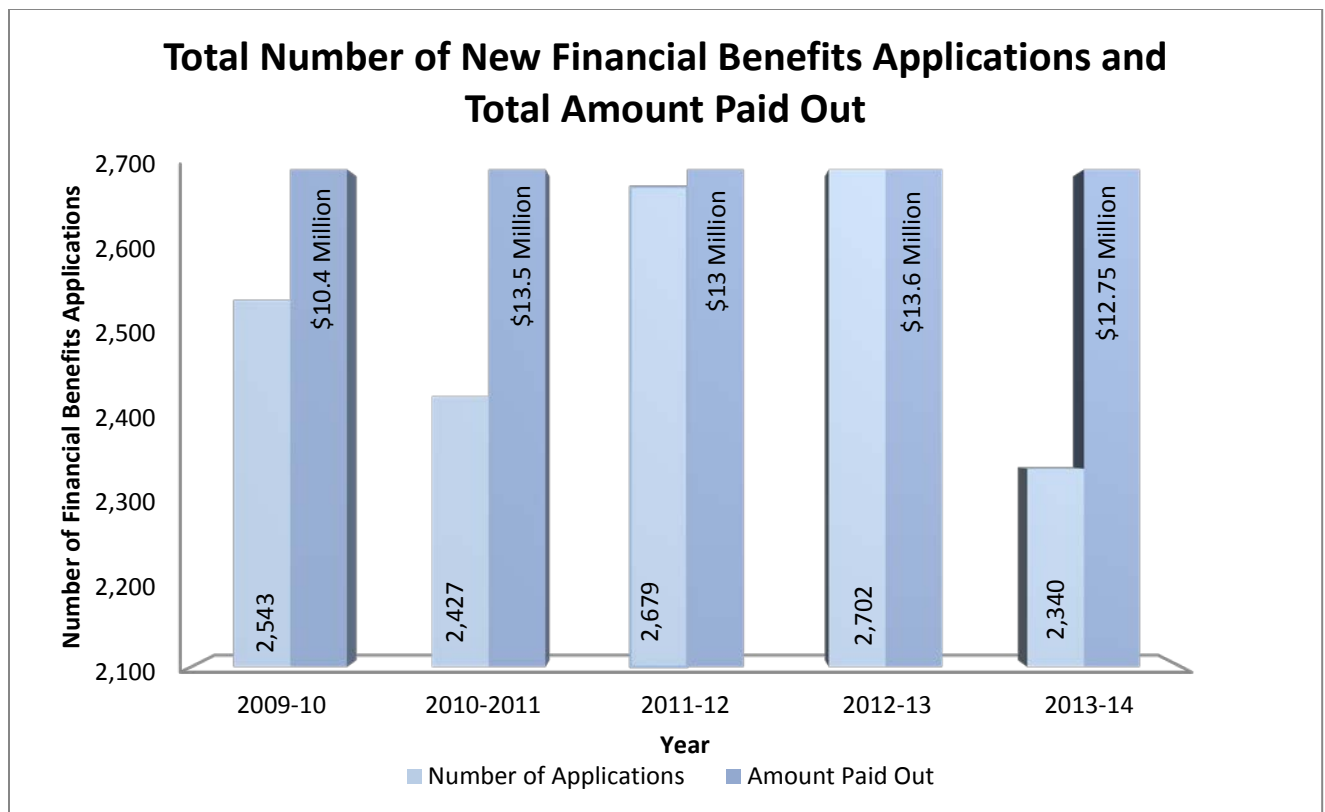
The services provided to victims by police and community-based victim serving organizations are not the only supports available to victims of crime. The Financial Benefits Program is an integral component of Alberta Justice and Solicitor General's (JSG) approach to assisting victims of crime. The Financial Benefits Program provides a monetary benefit directly to eligible victims of violent crime in Alberta.

The Financial Benefits Program was introduced in November 1997 as part of Alberta's *Victims of Crime Act* (VOCA), and is supported by the Victims of Crime Fund (VOCF). The Financial Benefits Program provides a financial benefit to eligible victims of violent crime in Alberta as an acknowledgment of their victimization. Benefits are based on the victim's verified injuries (physical and psychological). There is a death benefit to which funeral costs are reimbursed to a maximum of \$12,500. Psychological benefits of \$5,000 are provided to victims who witnessed the death of a loved one due to a violent crime. The benefit amounts are set out in the Victims of Crime Regulation.

The Financial Benefits Program is entirely funded from the VOCF. The program is the only victims' program in Canada that is not compensation-based. Benefits provided are an acknowledgement of victimization rather than compensation to replace lost wages or pay costs. The program does not place any restrictions on the use of the financial benefit allowing victims to use their benefit however they wish. Benefits for minors (under the age of eighteen) are administered by the Office of the Public Trustee on behalf of the child. Parents are able to access the funds for the child's use. This ensures the child's benefit is protected and is released to them upon turning eighteen.

The Financial Benefits Program also has a monthly supplemental benefit of \$1,000 for victims who sustain quadriplegia or severe brain injury as a result of a crime that has left them fully dependent on others for their day-to-day functions. The supplemental benefit was introduced in 2008. There are currently 19 victims in the province who are receiving this benefit.

In 2013-14, there were 2,340 applications for financial benefits submitted to the program (**Figure 4**). Approximately 63% of applicants received a financial benefit. During this period, a total of \$12.8M was provided directly to victims through the Financial Benefits Program. Of this \$861,000 was paid to victims receiving benefits under the former *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act*.



**Figure 4**

The Financial Benefits Program seeks to ensure that the application process does not re-victimize applicants. The program accomplishes this by placing the responsibility for information collection on staff. Staff collects all the required information to evaluate a victims' eligibility for Financial Benefits.

*I want to thank everyone involved in acknowledging my injuries...  
thank you for your kindness - Financial Benefits recipient*

Further acknowledgement of the victim is present in the program's commitment to on-going evaluation and amendments of both operational policy and the VOCA and Regulation. In 2011 there were significant amendments to the VOCA and Regulation. The death benefit was changed to reimburse funeral costs. A \$5,000 benefit was introduced for psychological injury, as a result of witnessing a loved one die as a result of a violent crime. The injury schedule was simplified and benefit amounts adjusted. In 2013, further amendments were made to the VOCA to simplify the process allowing for improved timelines for decisions.

The Program strives to continually improve processes and timelines to decisions. As such, turnaround time for decisions has been reduced substantially from one year to approximately five months. Applicants, who have new material information that could change the decision on their application, have the option to request a reconsideration of their financial benefits

application. There is no time restriction to do this. Many applicants are exercising this option which has led to a decrease in people requesting reviews with the Criminal Injuries Review Board.

*I would like to convey our sincerest thanks for the extra work that you did on our behalf; we received our money quickly. It has been a huge burden lifted off my shoulders. Thank you so much.*  
—Financial Benefits recipient.

## **Criminal Injuries Review Board**

If an applicant is not satisfied with the decision made by the Financial Benefits Program (Director's decision) regarding their application, they may request an independent review by the Criminal Injuries Review Board (CIRB). The CIRB is comprised of a maximum of six members, and one member is required to be a physician.

Applicants must submit their written request for a review within 30 days of receiving the decision letter regarding their financial benefits application. This deadline may be extended at the discretion of the Chair of the CIRB.

The Chair or a designate reviews all requests. If the request is found not to have grounds, the request for review will be dismissed; however, the applicant may appeal this decision to the Court of Queen's Bench.

In the event that the request for review is considered to have merit, it is referred to a panel. Applicants then have the option of having an oral review (hearing) or an administrative review (paper review). The CIRB will then confirm, rescind or vary the Director's decision. They may also refer the matter back to the Director if new material information is provided.

All decisions made by the CIRB are final except on questions of law or jurisdiction, in which case, an appeal can be made to the Court of Appeal.

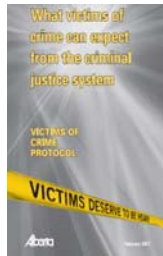
In 2013-14, the CIRB received 114 requests for review compared to 150 requests in 2012-13. Of the decisions that were made by CIRB, 7% were rescinded (overturned), 5% were returned to the Director with new information and 92% did not result in a change in the Director's decision.

## **Victims Services Initiatives**

Several initiatives have been implemented by Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) to enhance the administration of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to support victims of crime as they navigate the criminal justice system. A number of these programs and projects were achieved

in partnership with criminal justice stakeholders, including victim services units, law enforcement, Alberta Restorative Justice Association, Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services and the Alberta Police-Based Victim Services Association.

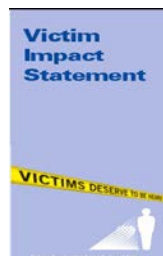
### **Victims of Crime Protocol: What Victims Can Expect from the Criminal Justice System**



*The Victims of Crime Protocol: What Victims Can Expect from the Criminal Justice System* is a reference manual for victims of crime. The *Protocol* assists victims by outlining what role each component within the criminal justice system plays from the time a crime is reported through to the police investigation and court proceedings. Information on provincial and federal Corrections and the Parole Board of Canada is also included. In addition, the *Protocol* explains what is expected of victims when dealing with the criminal justice system.

The *Protocol* was a first of its kind in Canada and has attracted national and international interest. A total of 12,004 copies of the *Protocol* were distributed to programs in 2013-14. An audio version of the *Protocol* is also available to better meet the needs of Albertans with visual impairments and/or low literacy. Copies are available from VSUs by request.

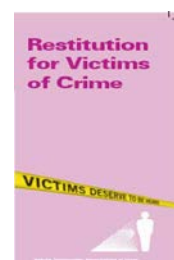
### **Victim Impact Statement Program**



The Victim Impact Statement Program is a voluntary program that provides victims in Alberta with an opportunity to have input into sentencing by describing in writing to the Court, how they have been affected by the crime.

In 2013-14, victim service programs reported distributing 17,661 Victim Impact Statement packages to victims of crime in Alberta. Victim service programs completed 4,276 Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms, and forwarded them to the clerk of the Court and Crown prosecutor's offices after charges had been laid.

### **Requesting Restitution Program**



The Requesting Restitution Program provides victims of crime who have suffered a financial loss with information about how they can request that the offender pay restitution. Restitution may be ordered for: damage, destruction and loss of property; psychological and/or bodily harm; expenses incurred in moving out of an offender's residence in spousal abuse cases; and losses incurred by unknowingly purchasing or lending money on stolen property.

In 2013-14, 10,877 Requests for Restitution were distributed by VSUs. The majority of Requests for Restitution that were distributed concerned non-violent crime. The next largest category was violent crime, followed by other crimes.

### **Victims Services Program Manager Training**

In 2013-14 the Basic Program Manager training and Advance Program Manager training were combined. The purpose of combining the two training events was an effort to make the training

more effective, as well as to facilitate networking and information sharing between new and experienced program managers. A total of 67 participants attended the training. As always, the purpose and intent of the training was to enhance participants' awareness and knowledge of the needs of victims of crime, emerging trends, available programs, legal remedies and initiatives aimed at assisting victims, and current initiatives within JSG Victims programs.

*I appreciate the ongoing Program Manager Training. Being new and to have the opportunity to take it again after a year of being in the position, helps make more sense of what we are doing and/or what we need to report on - Training Participant.*

### **Board Training**

JSG Victims Services provides learning opportunities for the boards of police-based Victim Services Units (VSU's) to help board members effectively administer and direct victims programs, and to carry out the financial responsibilities as laid out in their grant agreements. In 2013-14 24 boards were represented at the training sessions held in Manning, Red Deer and Lethbridge.

### **Aboriginal Awareness Training**



A three day training event took place in May for VSU program managers. The event was held in St. Albert. There were 26 registered participants for this training event. This training focused on Cree, Dene and Metis cultures, and included sessions on trauma, Indian residential schools and Aboriginal history. There were also sessions that focused on best practices for working with Aboriginal communities.

*I have gained so much valuable knowledge and information to take back to my community and workers. As well, my personal growth has grown so very much. Excellent conference!*  
-Training participant

*What an experience! I am much more aware of the culture and the different tribes/reserves. I feel more equipped to work better with my aboriginal clients/partners. Understanding protocols and the role of Elders was very important.* - Training participant

### **CanTalk**

JSG contracts CanTalk (Canada) Inc. to provide immediate interpretation and translation for victims in over 160 languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for all funded programs. In the 2013-14 fiscal year, victim services programs used CanTalk for a total of 358 phone calls in 26 different languages as well as one in-person translation.

## **Victims of Crime Website**

JSG Victims Services website [www.victims.alberta.ca](http://www.victims.alberta.ca) contains a wide range of information on victims programs and services in Alberta.

## **Funding Partnerships with the Policy Centre for Victims Issues**



The Policy Centre for Victim Issues at the Department of Justice Canada works toward giving victims an effective voice in the criminal justice system by:

- helping victims and their families understand their role in the criminal justice system and the laws, services and assistance available to support them;
- ensuring that the perspectives of victims will be fully considered when relevant federal laws and policies are developed; and
- increasing awareness both within Canada and internationally about the needs of victims of crime and effective approaches to respond to those needs

The Policy Centre for Victim Issues works with other federal government agencies and with provincial and territorial governments, to improve the experience of victims of crime in the criminal justice system. In 2013-14, the Policy Centre for Victims Issues partnered with Alberta Justice and Solicitor General by providing funding for three programs: Victim Advocate e-Learning Training, the Aboriginal Outreach Specialist Initiative, and the Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women Initiative.

### **Victim Advocate Training e-Learning Initiative**



In 2010-11, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) transitioned their existing training curriculum for victim advocates to an e-Learning environment. The e-Learning initiative directly links to the Department's mandate in addressing victims' issues, and specifically, the goals of standardizing training and enhancing services across the province. e-Learning provides training for victim services advocates and staff across Alberta.

In 2013-14 Victims Services e-Learning transitioned from its partnership with Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) to an in-house Learning Management System (LMS). The transition to the in-house LMS has streamlined administrative duties and timelines (i.e. registration,

certification) and allows for content to be updated in an efficient and timely manner. The chosen LMS host also empowers victim services coordinators to track advocate progress through the training.

Training continues to focus on front-line services to victims of crime and the wide range of issues Victim Services staff face such as crisis intervention, court orientation, e-crimes and domestic violence. As with the previous LMS system, the current program features interactive videos and web links. Learners can take the training anytime and anywhere. Benefits of the program include:

- reduced long-term distribution and facilitation costs;
- increased training opportunities for volunteers;
- increased access for those in Aboriginal communities and remote areas;
- timely revision of materials to reflect legislative and policy changes;
- standardized learning measures; and
- quick and efficient delivery of training.

Victim Services Units (VSUs) supplement e-Learning with face-to-face training sessions for team building and to highlight local expertise in conjunction with the e-Learning training.

*This was a great journey of learning and definitely an eye-opening process. I have always been a kind, giving and tolerant person, but I have come to realize that I may need to work on these values a little more. Self-improvement doesn't hurt anyone. Somehow the world to me just got bigger after completing the modules, I know that I will become a better person by using new-found skills as a VSU advocate and in my daily life. – e-Learning Participant*

*I have really enjoyed this course. I was impressed with how well the material is laid out and all the videos to reinforce what you are reading. I look forward to getting started as an Advocate – e-Learning Participant*

### **Aboriginal Outreach Specialist Initiative**



Building on the success of the underserved Aboriginal victims of crime outreach pilot project, an additional five years of funding was received from Justice Canada's Policy Centre for Victim Issues to expand this initiative. Three Victim Services programs (St. Paul and Area Victim Services Society, Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council Victim Services Unit, and Lac La Biche Victim Services Society) received additional funding to facilitate the provision of dedicated outreach services to Aboriginal victims of crime in their home communities.

The goals of this initiative are to expand on previous successes, using the promising practices that were identified to reduce barriers to accessing services. There are a total of 12 Aboriginal communities now receiving outreach services: Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Goodfish Lake First Nation, Frog Lake First Nation and the Fishing Lake Metis Settlement, Kapawe'no First Nation, Swan River First Nation, Driftpile First Nation, Sawridge Band, Sucker Creek First Nation, Heart Lake First Nation, Beaver Lake Cree Nation, and the Kikino Metis Settlement.

In their reporting over the past three years, all of the projects commented that having a consistent presence within the community increased victim participation in the criminal justice system. Lac La Biche VSU stated that “educating the victim about their role seems to empower them because they realize how important their contribution is”. Lesser Slave Lake VSU said that “the more visible and consistent we are in maintaining the presence on the First Nation, the stronger the trust and willingness to make self-referrals are... this has also resulted in the number of victims who had not reported crimes accessing Victim Services resources and information”. St. Paul VSU acknowledged that “home visits when required... has also assisted in access to service and has meant convenience and the bridging of communication issues for many victims”.

### **Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women Initiative**

In addition to victims' trends highlighted for Alberta, there is an increasing awareness of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. In 2010, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) issued a report called *Sisters in Spirit*, which documented disappearances and murders of over 600 Aboriginal women and girls in Canada over a twenty year period. The issue has garnered significant attention at the provincial, national, and international levels.

In response to the report, the Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women Initiative (MMAW) was initiated by JSG Victims Services in 2013 to help identify challenges associated with existing supports and services. At the victim serving organization level, there is recognition that there is a gap in supports for families and friends of missing or murdered Aboriginal women. The overarching goal of the initiative is to further explore the issue of MMAW in Alberta. Its primary focus however is on Victim Services responses.

Consultations with Aboriginal communities were identified as integral to exploring the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. A significant component of the MMAW initiative is community and stakeholder engagement, which will involve selected Aboriginal communities plus various stakeholders and service providers across Alberta who may provide service and expertise in the area of missing persons and homicide. The initiative provides Aboriginal communities and service providers with an opportunity to share their experiences, knowledge and wisdom in the area of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and to contextualize the issue.

In 2013-14 phases one and two of the initiative were completed. Phase one focused on research development and design, which involved designing of the research process, development of interview questions, contacting key community members, identifying partners and beginning data collection. Phase two focused on research implementation. This included finishing interviews with project partners, continued data collection and beginning community interviews (both group and individual).



## Appendix

**The following is the total amount of grants to police-based programs in 2013-14:**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Airdrie and District Victims Assistance Society <sup>5</sup>	\$214,583
Assumption Region Community Policing Society	\$112,500
Athabasca Regional Victim Services Society <sup>6</sup>	\$26,842
Barrhead Community Victim Services Unit Association	\$35,325
Bashaw & District Victim Services Society	\$52,000
Battle River Victim Assistance Society	\$116,000
Beaver County Victim Services Association	\$52,500
Beaverlodge Victim Services Unit Society	\$27,100
Big Country Victim Services Association	\$114,000
Blackfalds & District Victim Support Society	\$113,500
Blood Tribe Police Victim Services Unit	\$150,000
Bonnyville Victim Services Society	\$146,827
Bow Island - Foremost Victim Assistance Association	\$77,696
Bow Valley Victim Services Association	\$85,719
Brooks and District Victims' Assistance Association	\$121,550
Calgary Police Service Victims Assistance Unit	\$300,000
Camrose & District Victim Services Society	\$113,500
Cardium Region Victim Services Unit Society	\$135,000
Chinook Arch Victim's Services Society	\$110,250
Cochrane and Area Victim Services Society	\$135,664
Cold Lake Victim Services Society	\$150,000
Coronation/Consort Victim Services Unit	\$53,000
Crisis Association of Vegreville	\$27,350

<sup>5</sup> Two payments were made in 2013-14 Fiscal Year in order to align agency grant year with the fiscal year (\$83,333 for May 1, 2013- Dec. 31, 2013 and \$131,250 in Jan. 1, 2014 to Dec.31, 2014)

<sup>6</sup> First quarterly installment payment, Jan to Dec 2014

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Eagle Tower Victim Services Society	\$75,000
Edmonton Police Service Victim Service Unit	\$300,000
Edson and District Victim Services Society	\$70,000
Elk Point and Area Victim Services Society	\$77,250
Fairview Victims Assistance Association	\$81,000
Flagstaff Victim Services Society	\$59,000
Foothills Regional Victim Services Association <sup>7</sup>	\$116,865
Foothills Regional Victim Services Association	\$65,000
Fort McMurray Victim Services Society	\$150,000
Grande Cache Victim Services Society	\$70,114
Grande Prairie and District Victim Services Association	\$150,000
Heartland Victim Services Unit Society	\$51,530
High Level Community Policing Society	\$150,000
High Prairie & District RCMP Victims Assistance Society	\$131,000
Highway 43 RCMP Victims' Services Unit Society	\$41,085
Hinton District Victim Services Society <sup>8</sup>	\$158,000
Innisfail and District Victim Services Society	\$53,000
Jasper Victims Services Society	\$92,610
Lac La Biche Society, Victim Services Unit	\$137,815
Lacombe Victim Services Association	\$38,600
Leduc and District Victim Assistance Society	\$150,000
Lethbridge Detachment Victim Assistance Society	\$65,296
Lethbridge Regional Police Service Victim/Witness Services	\$150,000
Mackenzie Regional Community Policing Society	\$150,000
Manning Regional Victim Services Society	\$46,500

<sup>7</sup> First installment was provided for flood relief efforts funding

<sup>8</sup> Two payments were made in 2013-14 Fiscal Year in order to align agency grant year with the fiscal year (\$61,000 for Apr 1, 2013- Dec. 31, 2013 and \$97,000 for Jan. 1, 2014 to Dec.31, 2014)

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Maskwacis Victim Services Society	\$150,000
Medicine Hat Police Service Victim Assistance Unit	\$150,000
Midwest Victim Services Inc.	\$90,291
Peace Regional Victim Services Society	\$150,000
Ponoka Victims Services Association	\$96,000
Ranchlands Victim Services Society	\$142,333
Ranchlands Victim Services Society for Crowsnest Pass	\$48,880
Red Deer City RCMP Victim Services	\$150,000
Redcliff Victim Service Unit Association	\$58,000
Redwater - Smoky Lake Victim Services Society <sup>9</sup>	\$256,658
Rimbey and District Victim Services Society	\$81,000
Rocky & District Victim Services Unit Society	\$124,000
Slave Lake Victim Services Society	\$130,000
St. Albert Victim Service Association	\$139,000
St. Paul and Area Victim Services Society	\$150,000
Strathcona County RCMP Victim Services Unit	\$150,000
Strathmore Regional Victim Services Society	\$135,800
Sturgeon Victim Services Association	\$88,200
Sylvan Lake & District Victim Services Association	\$95,000
Taber Community Action and Prevention Society (TCAPS)	\$46,000
The Volunteer Programs Association – Fort Saskatchewan	\$79,567
Three Hills Victim Services Association	\$68,000
Two Hills and Area Victim Services Society	\$41,000
Valleyview Victims Assistance Society	\$72,000
Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District	\$150,000
Vulcan Regional Victims Services Society	\$49,000

<sup>9</sup>Two payments were made in 2013-14 Fiscal Year in order to align agency grant year with fiscal year (\$107,000 for Apr. 1, 2013- Dec. 31, 2013 and \$ 149,658 in Jan. 1, 2014 to Dec.31, 2014)

Wabasca Regional Victim Services Society	\$133,612
Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association	\$75,630
Wetaskiwin and District Victim Services Society	\$150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,285,542</b>

**The following is the total amount of grants made to community-based programs in 2013-2014:**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Action Coalition on Human Trafficking Alberta Association <sup>10</sup>	\$37,500
Alberta Police-Based Victim Services Association (APBVSA)	\$105,000
ASSIST Community Services Centre <i>Responding to Victims of Family Violence in the Chinese Community</i>	\$136,500
Bissell Centre <i>Street Level Victim Service Program</i>	\$142,050
Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association <i>Chinese Community Response to Family Violence</i>	\$150,000
Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA) <i>Police and Court Education and Support Program (PACES)</i>	\$150,000
Calgary Drop In Centre	\$146,900
Calgary Family Services Society <i>A Coordinated Community Response to Victims of Elder Abuse in Calgary</i>	\$150,000
Calgary Legal Guidance <i>Court Preparation and Restraining Order Program (Calgary Legal Guidance/YWCA of Calgary)</i>	\$119,500
Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse (CSICA) <i>The Child Witness Court Preparation Program</i>	\$150,000
Catholic Social Services <i>Elder Abuse Program</i>	\$150,000
CEASE: Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation <i>STAR- Support-Transition-Action-Recovery Project</i>	\$142,000
Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre (CASASC)	\$103,389

<sup>10</sup> Pro-rated 3 month payment provided in order to align agency grant year with fiscal year.

Program Name	Grant Amount
Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter Society <i>Domestic Violence Court Case Coordination Project</i>	\$150, 000
Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society <i>Red Deer DV Collaborative Court Project</i>	\$150,000
Diverse Voices Family Violence Conference	\$31,000
Edmonton John Howard Society <i>Victims Assistance Program (VAP)</i>	\$150,000
Family Law Office	\$150,000
HomeFront Society for the Prevention of Domestic Violence <i>DV Court Support Program and Partner Support Program</i>	\$150,000
Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council	\$150,000
The Lethbridge Senior Citizen Organization (LEARN)	\$101,000
Lloydminster Sexual Assault and Information Centre <i>Crisis Intervention/Witness Program</i>	\$44,100
Multicultural Women & Seniors Services Association of Edmonton <i>Responding to Victims</i>	\$93,000
P.A.C.E. (Providing Assistance, Counselling & Education) <i>Caribou Child and Youth Centre, Regional Sexual Assault Centre, Court Support Program</i>	\$147,800
RCMP KARE Victim Services	\$77,000
RCMP K Division - Community Policing - Victim Services Program	\$93,893
SAFFRON Centre Ltd. <i>Seeds of Healing Program</i>	\$15,000
Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre	\$146,200
Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE)	\$150,000
Siksika Health Services <i>Siksika Crisis Response Team- Victim Services</i>	\$150,000
Stop Abuse in Families Society (SAIF)	\$44,000
Strathcona Shelter Society (A Safe Place) <i>Victim Advocate</i>	\$50,000

The Today Family Violence Help Centre	\$61,114
The Parkland and Area Response to Family Violence Committee	\$59,000
Tsuu T'ina Nation Band – Stoney Corrections Society <i>Victim Services Program</i>	\$150,000
Zebra Child Protection Centre Society <i>Child Support Services</i>	\$150,000
YWCA Safe Visitation	\$75,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,220,946</b>

**VICTIMS DESERVE TO BE HEARD**