

The Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP)

The CVAP is a financial benefits program to assist victims, immediate family members, and witnesses in dealing with the effects of violent crime. CVAP helps to offset financial loss and assist in recovery from injury. CVAP is part of a network of victim service programs throughout B.C.

Can I apply for crime victim assistance benefits?

If you have been physically or psychologically injured from a violent crime, or while trying to prevent a crime or arrest a person, you may apply for benefits as a victim. The crime must have occurred within B.C. after July 1, 1972.

You may also apply if you are an immediate family member of a victim; or, if you are a witness to a life-threatening or fatal crime committed against someone with whom you have a close emotional attachment.

The CVAP is not restricted to B.C. residents. As long as the crime occurred in B.C., it doesn't matter where you live. If you are a victim of a crime that was committed outside B.C., you should contact victim services in the place where the crime occurred.

What benefits may be provided?

Benefits for victims include:

- medical, dental, and prescription drugs
- counselling
- protective measures
- replacement of damaged or destroyed eyeglasses, clothing, disability aids
- childcare and homemaker services
- support for a child born because of a crime
- vocational services
- income support or lost earning capacity
- transportation and related expenses
- crime scene cleaning

Additional benefits are available to victims who have sustained serious disabilities from the crime.

Benefits for immediate family members include counselling, prescription drugs, transportation, and crime scene cleaning. In cases involving fatalities, benefits also include funeral expenses, bereavement leave, and other benefits to support spouses, children, and financially dependent family members.

Benefits for witnesses include counselling, prescription drugs, transportation, and crime scene cleaning.

What types of losses are not covered?

- Compensation for pain and suffering
- Losses related to stolen items or money. If you are a victim of a property crime you may be able to recover some losses through insurance claims, small claims court, or, if the case goes to criminal court, restitution.
- Incidents that occur in the workplace if workers' compensation is payable
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Services or payments available from other benefits programs or insurance plans

How do I apply for benefits?

There are separate application forms for victims, immediate family members, and witnesses. Forms are available online at: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victim_services, from the CVAP office, or from local victim services. To find victim services in your community, call the **VictimLINK line toll free at 1-800-563-0808** (available 24 hours a day, and multilingual). For hearing impaired, go through Information Service Vancouver's TTY service at (604) 875-0885 (collect calls accepted).



When filling out your application, make sure to sign it wherever indicated. Enclose any original receipts for expenses related to the crime. Mail your application to the address on the form. *Minors (under 19) do not need a parent or guardian to apply on their behalf if they are able to apply on their own.*

Is there a deadline for me to apply?

You should apply as soon as possible after the crime. You don't have to wait until charges are laid or the perpetrator is convicted. In most cases, your application must be received within one year of the date the crime occurred. Exceptions:

- there is no time limit for applications from victims of sexual offences
- minors have until they turn 20 (no deadline if it was a sexual offence)
- late applications may be allowed in exceptional circumstances

What if I am eligible for benefits from other sources?

If you are eligible for benefits from other sources, you must apply for them. CVAP takes into account any amounts paid or payable to you in relation to the crime, from other sources such as benefits programs or insurance plans. Benefits from these sources must be deducted from CVAP benefits.

What happens after I apply?

Your application will be registered and you will receive a letter with your claim number. CVAP staff will collect information relevant to your claim, such as reports from police, doctors, or others. CVAP staff may contact you for additional information or clarification. *If you move, make sure to provide CVAP with your new address and phone number.*

Why might a claim be denied?

Reasons may include:

- insufficient evidence
- indirect or direct contribution to the crime
- failure to cooperate with the criminal investigation or prosecution

There must be an eligible victim for benefits to be provided to immediate family members or witnesses. If a victim's claim is denied, benefits are not available to immediate family members or witnesses.

What if there is a change in my circumstances or there is new information?

Please inform CVAP staff as soon as possible of any changes in your circumstances such as worsening or improving of an injury, leaving or returning to the workforce, or additional expenses. This can include any evidence that wasn't previously available. The new information will be reviewed to see if it affects your eligibility for benefits. You will be notified, in writing, of the outcome.

What if I think a mistake was made?

If there is no new information but you believe a significant error was made in the decision, you must submit a written request for review within 60 days. Your request must specify what error was made. The decision will be reviewed and you will be notified, in writing, of the outcome.

What if I sue the perpetrator?

You can receive benefits whether or not you sue the perpetrator. If you sue and are successful, you may have to repay some or all of the benefits you received from CVAP.

How can I contact the Crime Victim Assistance Program?

- Phone: (604) 660-3888 in the Lower Mainland, or toll free in B.C. 1-866-660-3888
- E-mail: SGCrimeVictimAssistanceProgram@gov.bc.ca
- Website: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victim_services/cva/index.htm

