

# **Financial Assistance for Victims of Crime**

## Financial assistance for victims of crime

The Victims of Crime Assistance Scheme started on 1 May 2007. The scheme pays financial assistance to victims of crime in certain circumstances.

### Who can get financial assistance?

You may be eligible to claim financial assistance under the scheme if:

- You are the victim of a violent act and are injured or experience financial loss as a result of the injury;
- You are the victim of a violent act such as sexual assault regardless of whether you suffer any additional injury; or
- You are a close family member of a person killed as a result of a violent act, and experience financial loss.

Being a victim of a violent act also includes someone injured because they:

- Are present at the scene and witness the offence;
- Try to rescue another person; or
- Try to stop the violent act from taking place.

### What is a violent act?

A violent act is a criminal act that causes injury or death. It can be either a single act or a series of acts over a period of time, committed against the same victim by the same offender.

### Need an immediate payment?

If you are experiencing financial hardship, you may be entitled to an immediate up front payment of up to \$5,000. This payment would be to cover your financial loss - out of pocket expenses such as medical costs and loss of earnings.

## Financial assistance payments

Financial assistance is available for:

- Injuries received as a result of a violent act, including psychological injuries;
- Loss of earnings;
- Medical expenses you have paid, or will need to pay; and
- Other expenses, such as the cost of travel to medical appointments and damage to your personal items.

You can claim up to \$10,000 for financial loss (out of pocket expenses), and up to \$40,000 if you were injured as a result of a violent act. The total amount you receive will depend on the extent of your injuries and the losses you have suffered. The maximum total amount is \$40,000.

In the event that a victim dies as a result of a violent act, a family member may claim funeral expenses and/or financial support.

## What will I need to show?

Copies of police reports and medical records will be required to support your claim. In some cases, it may also be necessary to obtain detailed medical reports.

If you have these documents, you should provide them with your application. If you do not provide them, the Crime Victims Services Unit will need your permission to get this information.

Receipts and copies of accounts and documents, such as pay slips, will be required if you are claiming out of pocket expenses or loss of earnings.

## When should I make an application for financial assistance?

You have two years from the date of the violent act or injury to make an application. An application should be made once you have reached an acceptable level of recovery from the violent act so that you are able to provide a better estimate of the financial assistance you require.

A close family member of someone who is injured or dies as a result of a violent act has two years from the date of the injury or death to make an application.

The Director of the Crime Victims Services Unit may accept a late application if there are good reasons why the application was not made within the time limit.

## What could affect my application?

Your application may be refused if:

- You did not report the violent act to the police within a reasonable time (unless you can show the delay was reasonable);
- You did not assist police in the investigation or prosecution of the offender/s;
- The violent act cannot be proved;
- Your injury was caused by a motor vehicle accident and you are entitled to payment under the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act;
- Your injury is employment related, unless your employer is disputing your claim for worker's compensation;
- You are entitled to payment for the injuries, expenses and losses from another source (for example medical expenses covered by private health insurance, or you are entitled to money or property from the deceased victim's estate); or
- You do not have adequate proof of your injuries, loss or expenses.

The amount of financial assistance to which a victim is entitled may be reduced if the assessor considers the victim participated in the violent actor assisted the offender. The amount may also be reduced if the award is likely to benefit the offender, because of a connection between the victim and the offender.

## How do I make an application?

Application forms are free, and there is no charge for lodging an application.

You can request an application form by:

**Telephoning:** 1800 460 363 or (08) 8935 7777 (for interstate callers)

**Writing to:** Crime Victims Services Unit

GPO Box 1722

Darwin NT 0801

**Emailing:** [cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au](mailto:cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au)

**Visiting:** Level 1, Darwin Central

21 Knuckey Street, Darwin

Application forms can be downloaded from the website at:

[www.cvsu.nt.gov.au](http://www.cvsu.nt.gov.au)

Application forms can also be obtained from your local courthouse, counsellors, Legal Aid, Aboriginal Legal Aid and community legal services across the Territory.

Your completed application form and supporting documents should be returned to the Crime Victims Services Unit in Darwin or lodged at your local court house in regional centres. The Unit will accept hard copy and email applications.

If you require assistance to complete your application or have any queries in relation to your eligibility, you can contact an officer at the Crime Victims Services Unit.

If you do engage a solicitor to prepare and lodge your application, the assessor cannot award financial assistance to cover any legal fees.

## **Support for victims of crime**

If you are a victim of a violent act or relative or close friend of a victim you are entitled to free crisis counselling. Crisis counselling services for victims of crime are located across the Territory. For more information, please contact CatholicCare NT on 1800 899 855 or (08) 8944 2000.

## **For More Information**

Crime Victims Services Unit

Level 1, Darwin Central  
21 Knuckey Street, Darwin

GPO Box 1722, Darwin NT 0801

**FREECALL:** 1800 460 363

**Email:** [cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au](mailto:cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.cvsu.nt.gov.au](http://www.cvsu.nt.gov.au)

## **Office Hours**

8:30am to 4:00pm Monday – Friday

Please note, staff are unable to provide legal advice