



## Factsheet 18: Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme

If you've been the **victim of an act of violence**, you may be able to get some **financial assistance**. The information in this factsheet applies to people who have been a victim of an act of violence in the ACT.

### What is an act of violence?

Examples of an act of violence include (but are not limited to) murder, manslaughter, assault, sexual assault or robbery. Family violence offences are also included. For example, destroying or damaging property, negligent or dangerous driving and contravention of family violence order.

You may still be able to get financial assistance even if the person who committed the act of violence can't be identified or has not been charged, convicted or found guilty of the offence.

### Do I need to report it to the police?

You must report the act of violence to the police before you submit your application unless you are considered to be a special reporting class victim.

A special reporting class victim is generally a victim of a sexual offence or someone who is under 18 years old or has impaired physical, psychological or intellectual capacity. They need to satisfy different reporting requirements (e.g. report the act of violence to a government agency and to a doctor/psychologist/social worker).

### What is considered an injury?

An injury includes a physical injury, mental illness and/or mental disorder.

If the injury is the result of a sexual offence or family violence offence, then injury also includes an unplanned pregnancy, a sense of violation, a reduced sense of self-worth and increased fear or feelings of insecurity.

### Financial assistance

In general, to be eligible for financial assistance, you will need to fall into one of the five victim classes. The payment type you may be eligible for and the total amount that you can be awarded will vary depending on your victim class (refer to Table1: Victim classes and payments).



**Table 1: Victim classes and payments**

<b>Victim class</b>	<b>Immediate need payment</b> Made quickly to promote recovery, prevent further harm and minimise safety threats.	<b>Economic need payment</b> Provides for payment of expenses or loss of earnings as a direct result of the injury.	<b>Recognition payment</b> Lump sum payments to acknowledge the trauma suffered by the victim.	<b>Total financial assistance available</b>
<b>Primary victim</b> A person who has been injured or dies as a direct result of an act of violence done by another person.	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$50,000
<b>Class A related victim</b> A dependant, close family member* OR partner of the primary victim.	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$30,000
<b>Class B related victim</b> A financial dependent AND either a close family member* or partner of the primary victim.	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$20,000
<b>Class C related victim</b> A family member (a brother, sister, step-sibling, half-sibling or considered to be one of these in their community if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander) AND financially independent of the primary victim.	Yes	Yes	No	\$10,000
<b>Homicide witness</b> A person who has been injured as a result of being present when the homicide occurs or being a witness in a criminal investigation/proceeding related to the homicide.	Yes	Yes	No	\$10,000

\*Close family member includes the partner, parent, guardian or step-parent, child or stepchild of the primary victim.

**Note:** the maximum amount for financial assistance relating to domestic violence offences is \$10,000.



### **Funeral expenses payment**

You may be eligible for the funeral expenses payment if you have paid (or are required to pay) for the cost of a funeral for a person who has died as a result of a homicide. The total amount that can be paid is \$8000.

### **Ineligibility for financial assistance**

You will not be eligible if you were involved in a serious crime at the time, if you conspired with the offender, or you unreasonably failed to give assistance to police in relation to the act of violence.

You will also have your payment reduced if you receive any associated payments that cover the same harm or loss as the financial assistance is intended to cover. For example you won't be eligible if you can access Workers Compensation, insurance or court awards to cover the costs.

### **How to apply**

Applications are made to Victim Support ACT and decided by the Victims of Crime Commissioner. The application form is available online at [www.victimsupport.act.gov.au](http://www.victimsupport.act.gov.au) and once completed you can either:

- email it to [fasvsact@act.gov.au](mailto:fasvsact@act.gov.au) or
- post it to:  
Financial Assistance Scheme,  
Victim Support ACT  
GPO Box 158  
Canberra ACT 2601

### **Time limits**

You must submit your application within 3 years of your injury, or if you were under 18 when you were injured you need to apply by your 21st birthday. The Commissioner can extend the time limit in some circumstances.

You must make the application for the funeral expenses payment within 3 years after the death of the person.

### **What information should I include with my application?**

You should include supporting documentation with the application. This may include: medical reports about your injury; police statements; receipts, quotes or invoices for any other money you spent because of the act of violence; and your payslips if applying for lost wages.

The Commissioner might require you to undergo a medical examination before you can get assistance. If you need to do this, the Commissioner will pay for the costs.

### **Where can I get more information?**

- Call Street Law for help on 6218 7995 or email us on [streetlaw@canberracommunitylaw.org.au](mailto:streetlaw@canberracommunitylaw.org.au). We are a free legal service for people in the ACT who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Visit [www.victimsupport.act.gov.au](http://www.victimsupport.act.gov.au)