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**MANITOBA GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES \$1.5 MILLION IN GRANTS AVAILABLE
TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

Manitoba's law enforcement agencies are encouraged to apply for \$1.5 million in grants to invest in specialized equipment, training and other resources to support their work and create safer communities across the province, Justice Minister James Allum announced today.

"We are continuing to make important investments in law enforcement, to help officers do their jobs more effectively with the right tools and training," said Minister Allum. "Through the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund, we are draining money from criminal activity and putting it to work in our communities. This is part of our commitment to a safer Manitoba for all residents and an opportunity to give back to the law enforcement community."

Money that has been obtained or used in illegal activity can be seized by the province under the Criminal Property Forfeiture Act. It is then deposited into the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund and redistributed to law enforcement agencies through these grants. Funding will also be provided to Manitoba Justice Victim Services branch to support its work with Manitobans affected by crime.

"This program proves the power of compound interest," said Devon Clunis, president, Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police. "Law enforcement has already seen a return on its investment in halting these criminal operations. Taking the proceeds of those crimes out of the hands of the criminals and putting it in the hands of law enforcement sets us up for greater returns on our efforts to further reduce and prevent crime in Manitoba."

As part of the application process, law enforcement agencies must explain how the new resources would promote safer communities and reduce or prevent crime, Minister Allum said. Applications must be received by Manitoba Justice by March 30. Approved projects will be announced later this year.

Last year, over \$1.2 million in grants was provided to law enforcement agencies, Manitoba's victims' services unit and the Office of the Fire Commissioner. The grants were used to purchase:

- a robot used to detonate suspected explosives and surveillance equipment for the Winnipeg Police Service;
- new computer systems for all 12 police vehicles serving the communities of Winkler, Morden and Altona;
- an unmanned aerial device for search-and-rescue missions, automated licence plate readers, surveillance equipment and support for youth-focused community safety initiatives for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police;

- a digital fingerprint scanner, thermal imaging camera and portable radios for the Brandon Police Service; and
- a dedicated vehicle for the Dakota Ojibway Police Service K-9 unit.

Manitoba Justice Victim Services branch received \$150,000 from the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund last year, which was used to support:

- Ka Ni Kanichihk (Medicine Bear Counselling), which provides trauma and grief counselling to families of missing and murdered women;
- Eyaa-Keen, which provides trauma treatment and support to Indigenous people affected by crime through traditional ways and teachings;
- Aurora Family Therapy Centre (Thompson Family Bereavement Support Group), which helps individuals and families in northern Manitoba cope with losing a loved one to homicide;
- Family Dynamics, a Winnipeg-based organization which counsels families affected by domestic violence;
- a travel fund to allow family members of homicide victims to attend sentencing hearings; and
- interpreters to help individuals applying for protection orders.

“The grant program helps enhance the supports and services available to Manitobans affected by crime, ensuring they get the help they need,” said Minister Allum. “All Manitobans benefit from this program’s focus on community safety, better-equipped officers, crime-reduction and an ongoing commitment to victim services.”

More than \$11 million in assets has been successfully forfeited to Manitoba through criminal property forfeitures since 2010. There are currently more than 150 forfeiture files being pursued involving vehicles, properties and cash, the minister said, adding the fund also provided financial compensation directly to individual victims.

For more information about the Criminal Property Forfeiture Branch, visit:

www.gov.mb.ca/justice/safe/cpf/index.html.