



# Support

for Crime Victims and Witnesses



**Manitoba Justice – Victim Services supports victims of serious crimes, as outlined in *The Victims’ Bill of Rights*. This includes victims of domestic violence and other serious crimes, such as fatalities and sexual assaults. Victim Services also provides support to child victims and witnesses, and families of murdered and missing Indigenous persons. As well, support is offered to all individuals under the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*.**

Manitoba Justice – Victim Services offers free services to victims of crime throughout the province.

Victim Services helps people access their rights and understand their responsibilities, and also connects them to other agencies and useful resources. Specific services include:

- providing information about court and the criminal justice system
- explaining what to expect as charges move through the court process
- providing updates on cases
- liaising with the Crown attorney and other justice system staff
- short-term counselling and safety planning
- referrals to community resources
- information about the Compensation for Victims of Crime Program
- preparation for testifying in court
- direction on how to prepare and submit a Victim Impact Statement
- direction on how to register with the Parole Board of Canada
- online, multi-language fact sheets on safety planning and the dynamics of domestic violence
- training for community service agencies that may become designated to assist people who apply for protection orders

## Information

- court and criminal justice information
- updates on the case
- what to expect as the charges move through the court process
- how to submit a Victim Impact Statement
- how to find out about offender's release from jail
- how to register with the Parole Board of Canada

## Court Preparation

- preparation for testifying in court
- what to expect if subpoenaed to court
- visit to a courtroom

## Counselling and referrals

- short term counselling including safety planning
- referral to counselling resources and community agencies
- referral to Compensation for Victims of Crime

## **The Victims' Bill of Rights and the Victim Rights Support Service**

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*The Victims' Bill of Rights (VBR)* is Manitoba legislation that spells out the rights of victims of the most serious crimes. The VBR ensures crime victims' rights are recognized in their dealings with police, prosecutors, courts and corrections officials.

For more information on The VBR, including a list of the most serious crimes, please visit:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/vrss.html>

*The Victim Rights Support Service (VRSS)* deals with criminal court cases involving victims of serious crimes, as defined under the VBR. If you are the victim of a serious crime, VRSS workers are available to explain your rights and the services available to you, including:

- helping you to register for your rights under the VBR
- explaining when and how you may exercise your rights
- providing information about the prosecution and results of the case against the accused
- providing court support and information

If you are a victim of a serious crime, as outlined under the VBR, call 204-945-0662 in Winnipeg or toll free at 1-866-4VICTIM (1-866-484-2846).

**Note:** *If this is an emergency, contact your local police emergency number.*

## **Child Victim Support Service**

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*The Child Victim Support Service (CVSS)* helps victims and witnesses of abuse (under 18 years of age), adult survivors of sexual abuse, and other vulnerable victims (on a case-by-case basis) who are involved in the criminal court process.

CVSS helps victims and witnesses by:

- explaining the criminal court process and procedures
- preparing them for court

- attending court with them, when possible
- providing emotional support
- scheduling meetings with Crown attorneys to discuss concerns about court
- providing information and guidance on preparing Victim Impact Statements

For more information about CVSS, call 204-945-0662 in Winnipeg or toll free at 1-866-4VICTIM (1-866-484-2846). For more information or to download copies of court preparation books for children and youth, go to: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/cvss.html>.

If you think a child is being harmed or neglected, contact CFS at 1-866-345-9241.

**Note:** *If this is an emergency, contact your local police emergency number.*

### **Domestic Violence Support Service (DVSS)**

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*The Domestic Violence Support Service (DVSS) helps victims of domestic violence when criminal charges have been laid. DVSS also supports individuals who receive assistance from the Winnipeg Police Service for domestic incidents that do not result in charges or arrests.*

DVSS provides support and information to victims of domestic violence by:

- providing information about the criminal charges and the court process
- discussing safety planning
- providing information on protective orders
- helping victims understand the dynamics of domestic abuse
- advising Crown attorneys of concerns that victims may have about court cases
- preparing victims for court and, when possible, attending court proceedings with them
- providing information and referrals to community resources, as needed

DVSS can also assist victims of crime who are at an extremely high-risk of domestic violence, and meet eligibility requirements, by assigning them a Safetracks device. The Safetracks device is a two-way, hands-free device that when activated by the user goes directly to 911 services. Police are immediately dispatched to the victim's location.

For more information about DVSS, go to: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/dvss.html>.

If you are a victim of domestic violence, call Manitoba Justice – Victim Services, at 204-945-6851 in Winnipeg or toll free at 1-866-4VICTIM (1-866-484-2846). You will be connected with a victim service worker in your area.

**Note:** *If this is an emergency, contact your local police emergency number.*

### Cellphone Emergency Limited Link-Up Program

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If you are at a high risk of domestic violence and stalking, the *Cellphone Emergency Limited Link-Up (CELL)* program can provide an added level of protection for you. The program lends cell phones on a short-term basis to victims of domestic violence and stalking, who are thought to be at continued high risk.

If you have your own cell phone, you can also register for the program using your personal cell phone number. To be eligible for the program:

- You must have a protection plan in place.
- You must not live with the offender or accused.
- You must agree to stay in contact with your social services agency.

For more information on the CELL program, including eligibility requirements, go to: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/cell.html> or call Victims Services at 204-945-6851 or toll free 1-866-484-2846.

The CELL program is a co-operative effort between Bell MTS, social service agencies, police services and Manitoba Justice – Victim Services. It is available throughout Manitoba.



## **Victim Witness Assistance Program**

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*The Victim Witness Assistance (VWA) program supports crime victims and witnesses who are subpoenaed to appear in either provincial court or the Court of Queen's Bench, in Winnipeg.*

If you are subpoenaed to court as a victim or a witness to a crime, the program can help you by:

- contacting the Crown attorney with your concerns about your case
- providing information about testifying in court
- giving you guidance on preparing a Victim Impact Statement
- generally preparing you for court
- accompanying you to court
- notifying you if court has been cancelled
- reimbursing certain expenses

For more information about the VWA program, call 204-945-3594 or toll free at 1-866-635-1111, or go to: [http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/witness\\_assistance.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/witness_assistance.html).

## **Compensation for Victims of Crime Program**

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This program gives compensation, in the form of services and support, to victims or witnesses who have been injured physically or emotionally by a crime that occurred in Manitoba. It also gives compensation to the families and dependents of victims who died in a crime.

You may be eligible for this program if:

- You were injured or hurt in a crime.
- You personally witnessed a crime.
- Someone in your family was a victim who died in a crime (the deceased victim).

- The crime was reported to the police as soon as possible after it happened.
- You apply within one year of the crime.

**Note:** *The Compensation for Victims of Crime Program (CVCP) only covers physical or emotional injury. It does not cover lost or stolen property or belongings.*

For more information about the CVCP, including to learn more about the benefits that are available to eligible victims of crime, call 204-945-0899 or toll free 1-800-262-9344; or go to:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/compensation.html>.

### **Family Liaison Contact**

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*Manitoba Justice's Family Liaison Contacts (FLC)* provide support and information to families of missing and murdered Indigenous persons who have questions about the loss of their loved one. Referrals to the FLC can be made by individuals, community organizations, Indigenous organizations, Manitoba Justice – Victim Services, RCMP and the Winnipeg Police Service.

The FLCs partner with Elders and Indigenous agencies to ensure families have access to appropriate traditional supports while they seek information about their loved ones.

For more information about the FLCs, call 204-984-0504 in Winnipeg or toll free, 1-866-484-2846.

### **Protection Order Designate**

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*A Protection Order Designate (POD)* is a person who has been specially trained to help people apply for protection orders. You can apply for a protection order if someone has stalked you or subjected you to domestic violence and the situation is serious or urgent enough that protection is needed right away. You do not have to wait until you have actually been injured to seek help.



If you apply for a protection order, court staff will schedule a hearing for you and may recommend that you see a POD to help you with your application and to provide information about safety planning. There is no charge for getting a protection order, or for the services of a POD.

For more information about legal protection available through the courts and information about Protection Order Designates, call Manitoba Justice – Victim Services, at 204-945-6851 in Winnipeg or toll free 1-866-484-2846.



### **Victim Services Intervention Dog**

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In 2016, Manitoba Justice – Victim Services introduced Milan, an Accredited Facility Dog, to our team. Milan is a smart, friendly, black Labrador retriever, who has been trained by the Pacific Assistance Dog Society. Milan knows more than 30 commands and she has a calming and comforting effect on the people around her, especially children. Since starting work with us, Milan has participated in numerous meetings with children who have been victims of crime and trauma, and her affection and loving support has helped many child victims of crime as they testify in court.

To learn more about Milan, please visit: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/dog.html> or call 1-866-484-2846.

## Manitoba Victim Impact Statement

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If you are the victim of a crime and someone is found guilty of that crime, you have the right to prepare a Victim Impact Statement. This statement lets you tell the court how the crime has affected you, including:

- physical or emotional trauma
- property damage
- financial loss
- fears for your security

The court must take your Victim Impact Statement into account when an offender is sentenced.

Victim services workers are available to assist you with information and guidance on how to prepare a Victim Impact Statement.

If a victim dies or is incapable of providing a statement, a spouse, relative or guardian may complete it. If the victim is under the age of 18, a parent or guardian may complete the statement on the victim's behalf.

You can download a copy of a Victim Impact Statement form at:

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/impact\\_stmt.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/impact_stmt.html)

## The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights

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In 2015, *The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* came into effect. This new legislation grants certain rights throughout the criminal justice process to all victims of crime, upon request. These include:

### **Right to information**

You have the right to receive information about:

- the criminal justice system
- victim services and programs available to you as a victim of crime
- the progress of the case, including information on the investigation, criminal proceedings and sentencing of the person(s) charged



### ***Right to participation***

- You may submit a victim impact statement that describes to the court the impact the crime had on you, including any physical or emotional harm, property damage, financial loss and fears for your security.
- You have a right to express your views about the case.

### ***Right to protection***

You have the right to:

- have your security and privacy considered at all stages of the criminal justice process
- have reasonable and necessary protection from intimidation and retaliation
- request a testimonial aid (specific assistance that helps you to feel more secure if you have to testify in court)

### ***Right to seek restitution***

- If the charged person(s) has been found guilty, you may ask the court to consider making a restitution order for the financial losses related to the crime.
- If a restitution order is not paid, you have the right to pursue a claim in civil court.

For more information on the Canadian Victim Bill of Rights, visit:

<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/victims/003006-1003-eng.shtml>



### **For More Information**

*For more information about Manitoba Justice – Victim Services, visit: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/index.html> or contact the office nearest you:*

<b>Winnipeg</b>	204-945-6851
<b>Selkirk</b>	204-785-5213
<b>Portage la Prairie</b>	204-239-3378
<b>Morris</b>	204-746-8249
<b>Brandon</b>	204-726-7400
<b>Dauphin</b>	204-622-5080
<b>The Pas</b>	204-627-8483
<b>Thompson</b>	204-677-6368
<b>Toll free</b>	1-866-484-2846