

# Victim Services Program Evaluation

## Final Report

**PREPARED FOR**

Government of the Northwest Territories  
Community Justice & Policing

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**DATE**

April 30, 2020



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Evaluation Purpose

The NWT Victims Services Program (VSP) is a community-based program, meaning community organizations, not public servants, provide local and regional services to victims of crime. Services are provided through eight sponsoring community organizations that deliver services to all 33 communities in the NWT.

The objective of the study was to conduct a complete assessment of the Victim Services Program (VSP) across the Northwest Territories. The evaluation assessed Program responsiveness (e.g. needs of clients, fit of services to the identified needs), achievement of outcomes (e.g. extent to which Program is achieving its goals), effectiveness of design and delivery (e.g. adequacy of the community model), and opportunities for future improvement of the Program.

## Method of Study

The evaluation methodology included both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data were 81 key informant interviews with Victim Service providers, GNWT representatives, sponsoring organization representatives (e.g. executive directors), community stakeholders, and Court and Justice officials (e.g. Community Justice, RCMP, and Court officials). Secondary sources of data included program administrative data and expenditures, other reports and program files (e.g. VSP annual reports, contribution agreements), and an extensive literature review, including a review of best practices and a jurisdictional scan of delivery models in Canada and elsewhere (i.e. New Zealand, the United States, and Australia).

## Major Findings

### *Responsiveness to Client Needs*

There is a strong need for Victim Services given the high rates of reported and under-reported crime in the NWT. Police-reported family violence crimes are particularly high and disproportionately impact Indigenous women. The Program is responsive to the needs of victims and is generally reflective of type of victims and crimes reported by the police. Many clients who self-referred to the Program (an average of 20% to 30% over 4 years) and those who are recorded as 'continuous cases' were presumed to be the victims of unreported and under-reported crime. Indigenous women experiencing family violence remain the largest client group served by the Program.

The Program is responsive to the needs of victims it serves, particularly with respect to information needs, system navigation, referrals to other resources, safety concerns, and emotional support. However, several factors can make it difficult to reach all victims with services where and when needed. These include a lack of funding for travel (which limits providers' ability to build trust and relationships in outlying communities), challenges in reaching victims when they are most vulnerable (e.g. in the immediate aftermath of an incident or after-hours), and low awareness of the VCEF in outreach communities.



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## *Achievement of Outcomes*

The Program is perceived as effective in increasing understanding of the court process among victims participating in the justice system. However, these efforts have not necessarily translated in increased victims' participation in the system. Many factors other than availability of and access to information and supports for victims continue to contribute to high levels of unreported crimes and limit victims' participation in the justice system. They range from fear of the offender, shame and stigma, socio-economic factors and isolation, uncertainty and potential financial loss, mistrust in the system, lack of transportation and child-care, to the long court processes. In addition to these factors, participation in Restorative Justice (RJ) is further constrained by the types of incidents which are not suitable for RJ (e.g. seriousness of crime), capacity of the programs to engage victims, and reputation of the process in some communities.

Victim Service providers link clients to available services, particularly counselling, traditional wellness programs, the RCMP and legal services. In smaller communities, issues were raised regarding lack of much-needed services (e.g. shelters). In larger communities, the degree of fragmentation of services and high staff turnover pose a barrier to creating linkages and ensuring clients are served effectively. In some communities, interagency meetings are held regularly and have led to better collaboration among various services and resulted in new initiatives, though generally more formal collaboration is needed.

The Program contributes to victim safety by providing financial resources for emergencies, helping to create safety plans, and providing other needed support. Victim Service providers often go above and beyond to help victims fearful for their safety (e.g. opening their homes, providing transport). The Victims of Crime Emergency Fund has provided a total of nearly \$240,000 to over 330 victims (excluding victims of apartment fires in 2018/19) over five years to cover various expenses such as home repair, ID replacement, emergency food and clothing, and emergency phones and minutes. Some concerns were raised regarding the level of awareness and utilization of the fund among victims in outreach communities (as three communities accounted for two-thirds of funds expended).

Territorial and community level activities have increased the profile of the Program and public awareness of victimization. Most Victim Service providers are well known in their communities and participate in a wide range of awareness activities including community-wide events and collaborative events with other agencies. However, limited availability of resources at the community level contributes to somewhat inconsistent and sporadic public engagement activities and lack of focus on prevention. Some community stakeholders had a limited understanding of the Program and many noted a need for ongoing public engagement and increased efforts for a more collaborative approach to addressing concerns of those who are re-victimized or have complex needs.

Training provided by the GNWT has increased the ability of providers to meet the needs of victims. Sponsoring organizations differ in their capacity to support Victim Service providers. There is little formalized onboarding, in-house training, protocols or infrastructure established by sponsoring organizations to support consistency and sustainability of services. Very few Victim



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Service providers reported using the new self-care resources, mostly because it is difficult for them to take time off due to high demand for services and the responsibility they feel towards their clients.

Factors contributing to the effectiveness of the Program include capability and personality of individual Victim Service providers, strong relationships with the RCMP, a broadening of the scope of services to include victims of tragedy, collaboration with other community resources, and innovative public education approaches.

### *Design and Delivery*

The community-based model is perceived to be appropriate for the NWT context. Some advantages of the model included its flexibility, the practice of community members helping their community, and the perceived trustworthiness of community-based organizations. However, there were also numerous issues raised related to community dynamics and politics that can affect consistency of services, confidentiality (particularly in small communities), dependence on RCMP referrals, delayed first point of contact with victim services, and limited resources for traveling to outreach communities. The community-based model allows for increased flexibility with respect to how services are provided; however, the model also resulted in a shift from some of the Program's original objectives and expectations (e.g. the Program was designed to be a front-line service and first point of contact for victims, although in most communities the approach to Victim Services resembles that of case management). The reporting and monitoring requirements established are insufficient to provide reliable information and support Program delivery.

Although the VCEF is administered in a timely manner, there is some confusion regarding the formally established guidelines, which has resulted in inconsistencies in how funding guidelines are applied. A decrease in funding distributed over four years, despite the increase in level of crime, suggests that the Program requirements may be applied too rigidly in some communities. Concerns were raised regarding eligibility requirements regarding what is considered a 'crime,' when the crime occurred and whether it was reported to the police.

The overall level of funding for the Program is low particularly when compared to the alternatives (e.g. no support or cost of other services delivered by government). Most of the funding provided to communities is used for staff wages and benefits and as such goes directly to Program delivery. The formal allocation of funding (as per Contribution Agreements) for training and travel is minimal and varies significantly across communities.

The costs of the services delivered to new clients are estimated to be, on average, about \$1,500 per new client and about \$200 per case. This varies widely across communities, reflecting differences in the number of clients served. The level of funding provided to communities for Victim Services and outreach activities limits the ability of the Program to contribute to preventative initiatives and adopt a more integrated case management approach to helping the most vulnerable clients (e.g. those in outreach communities; isolated, revictimized clients; and those with multiple barriers).



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## Recommendations

The following are major recommendations arising from the evaluation, reflecting the roles and responsibilities of the GNWT and sponsoring organizations.

The GNWT should consider the following:

1. Introduce police-based Victim Services in communities where sponsoring organizations have demonstrated an inability to provide stable, ongoing service.
2. Restructure the VCEF to clarify its mandate and requirements and improve access.
3. Introduce additional requirements to be met by sponsoring organizations with respect to providing training and ensuring the well-being of Victim Service providers.
4. Create a more effective reporting and monitoring strategy.
5. Allocate additional resources for travel to outreach communities.

The sponsoring organizations should consider the following:

1. Create in-house onboarding processes and internal protocols.
2. Introduce referral protocols and information sharing agreements to improve integration of services.
3. Create a more strategic approach to public education and preventative measures.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BC – British Columbia

CA – Contribution Agreement(s)

CVBR – Canadian Victims Bill of Rights

CWC – Crown Witness Coordinators

GNWT – Government of Northwest Territories

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

MMIWG – Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

NWT – Northwest Territories

ODARA - Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessments

RJ – Restorative Justice

VCEF – Victims of Crime Emergency Fund

VIS – Victim Impact Statement(s)

VSP – Victim Services Program

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

In 2016-17, the Department of Justice Canada provided \$3.75 million over five years (or \$750,000 annually) to the Government of the Northwest Territories to support victim access to services. In 2018/19, there was a \$25,600 increase in the federal annual contribution for mental health support for Northwest Territories (NWT) Victim Service providers for a total of \$775,600 annually. In addition to this, the Government of the Northwest Territories provides \$705,000 per year plus a full-time position to coordinate and support community-based Victim Service providers. The total annual program budget is \$1,570,600.

The contribution supports the Victim Services Program; activities that support implementation of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights; management of the Victims of Crime Emergency Fund (VCEF), which helps offset costs to victims resulting from serious violent crimes; Victim Services staff; and training and publications. Services to victims are commonly provided through eight sponsoring community organizations that provide services to all 33 communities in the NWT.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to conduct a complete assessment of the Victim Services Program (VSP) across the Northwest Territories. The evaluation assessed:

- *Responsiveness to Needs* (e.g. identified needs for support, fit of the services and supports provided across different communities to the needs identified, access to services, gaps in supports available, eligibility, etc.).
- *Achievement of Outcomes* (e.g. the extent to which the Program is achieving results and supporting victims and their families, the impact of the Victims of Crime Emergency Fund) and whether the Program's goals and objectives have been met through the services offered.
- *Effectiveness of Design and Delivery*, including adequacy of the community model and supports, roles and responsibilities, partnerships and relationships, and costing model.
- *Opportunities for Future Improvement* to identify areas of Program improvement and development.

Specific evaluation questions related to each area of inquiry are presented in the following table.

**Table 1: Evaluation Issues and Questions**

Areas/Issues	Evaluation Questions
<b>Responsiveness to Needs</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what extent does the VSP reach the victims of crime and respond to the needs for support of diverse groups of victims across NWT communities?</li> <li>2. Are the services culturally appropriate for Indigenous clients?</li> <li>3. Does the VCEF meet the emergency needs of victims of crime?</li> <li>4. What gaps may exist in services available to victims across the NWT?</li> </ol>
<b>Achievement of Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. How effective is the VSP in <i>increasing access</i> to justice and participation in the justice system?</li> <li>6. To what extent does the Program <i>strengthen the capacity</i> of community organizations and service providers to develop and deliver supports that are</li> </ol>

Areas/Issues	Evaluation Questions
	needed? 7. Has the Program been effective in <i>promoting victims' rights</i> under the CVBR? 8. To what extent has the Program contributed to <i>increased public knowledge and awareness</i> of impacts of victimization?
<b>Design and Delivery</b>	9. Is the community-based model appropriate to meet the objectives of the Program? 10. Is the structure of the VCEF appropriate in providing timely and adequate support to victims of crime? 11. Are the resources allocated to the Program appropriate and cost effective?
<b>Opportunities</b>	12. What are the best practices and lessons learned regarding victim services design and delivery in the NWT context? 13. What are the opportunities for improvement for the current NWT Victim Services Program?

### 1.3 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in three phases. The first phase focused on the development of an evaluation work plan, which included the development of a detailed evaluation matrix, a preliminary review of available data, and the development of data collection tools. The second phase involved data collection through primary data sources (interviews) and a review of secondary data (administrative data, documents and files, and a review of literature). The evaluation was undertaken in the period from November 2019 to March 2020. A more detailed description of the various lines of evidence used in this evaluation is provided below.

- **Review of documents and files related to the Victim Services Program.** A wide range of program documents, files and reports were reviewed. Some examples of the documents reviewed include:
  - VSP Fact Sheet
  - VSP Annual Reports (2014/15 to 2018/19)
  - Job descriptions
  - Letter to Sponsoring Agencies – Supporting Victim Services Providers with Vicarious Trauma and Mental Health Wellness
  - VS Contribution Agreements
  - Community Contribution Agreements (2016/17 to 2018/19)
  - NWT Program Review (2013/14)
  - Community Narrative Mid-year and Year-end Reports (2016/17 to 2018/19).
  - Program training agendas and reports (2013/14 to 2019/20).
  - VCEF Program Report (2012)
- **Analysis of Program administrative data and other statistical information collected on Victim Services referrals.** In reviewing Program statistical data, we analyzed characteristics of clients served, referrals received and carried out by the Program, type of offence, type of services received, activities carried out by the Program, number of clients and amount of emergency funds approved. Two major sources of Program administrative data were used, namely VCEF Expenditure Reports (2014/15 to 2018/19) and Program Administrative Data (2015/16 to 2018/19), as well as statistics from monthly RCMP reporting to Mayors/Chiefs Statistics between 2016/17 to 2019/20 (RCMP Detachment Commanders provide monthly detailed reports to community leaders through

- Mayors'/Chiefs' reports).
- Extensive literature review.** This included statistical data from the NWT Bureau of Statistics, data from Statistics Canada, and studies and reports of Programs in other jurisdictions as well as a review of best practices and victim services delivered in other jurisdictions. The purpose of the literature review was to identify and collect data relevant to victim services in the NWT and to use publicly available data to become more familiar with the subject matter. A review of best practices was carried out along with a jurisdictional scan of delivery models in Canada and elsewhere (i.e. New Zealand, the United States, Australia). Types of publicly available literature and data reviewed included 1) Statistics Canada data (e.g. Family violence rates, victimization of aboriginal people in Canada), 2) NWT Bureau of Statistics data (e.g. police-reported incidents by community, population data), 3) the Victims of Crime Research Digest, 4) published research reports from Justice Canada, and 5) research studies and reports related to victims and victim services. A detailed list of the literature and data used in the review is provided in Appendix 1.
  - Interviews with 81 Key Informants:** The purpose of the interviews was to obtain input on various aspects of the programming, including the overall impact of the Program and community-level successes and challenges. The initial list of key informants to be interviewed was provided by Community Justice and Policing representatives from the GNWT. Additional community stakeholders and representatives were identified by sponsoring organizations and community representatives.

As demonstrated in the table below, 81 interviews were completed, including with six representatives of GNWT Community Justice and Policing, 16 representatives of sponsoring organizations (including executive directors, Victim Service providers and coordinators), 12 members of Community Justice Committees, 10 Court and Justice Officials, 10 RCMP representatives, 26 stakeholders from community organizations, and two Band Representatives. Given that only one organization uses volunteers, no volunteers were interviewed.

**Table 2: Key Informant Groups Interviewed**

Key Informant Groups	Target Number	Completed
GNWT – Community Justice and Policing	5	6
Sponsoring Organizations (Executive/VS Coordinator)	10-15	16
Community Justice Committees	10-15	12
Court and Justice Officials (e.g. prosecutors, lawyers, Courtworkers)	15-25	10
RCMP	10-15	9
Community Organizations (e.g. shelters, settlement services, counselling services, health, women support services, etc.)	10-15	26
Band Representatives	5-8	2
Volunteers	5-7	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>70-100</b>	<b>81</b>

The table below shows the breakdown of key informant interviews by community. As illustrated, 15 interviews were from Hay River, 18 from Inuvik, 15 from Yellowknife, 13 from Fort Simpson, nine from Fort Smith, six representing Tłı̨chǫ Nation, two from Tulita, and two from Fort Good Hope.

**Table 3: Interviews Completed by Community**

Community	Interviews Completed
Hay River	15
Inuvik	18
Yellowknife	15
Fort Smith	9
Fort Simpson	13
Fort Good Hope	2
Tłı̨chǫ	6
Tulita	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>

Key informant interviews were conducted in person or by telephone. In-person interviews were organized with the help of sponsoring organization representatives (e.g. Victim Service providers or coordinators) and were conducted during the community visit. Just under half (34) of community interviews were conducted in person.

- **Visits to five communities: Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Inuvik, Hay River, and Fort Simpson.** The purpose of the community visits was to engage with various service providers and clients. Unfortunately, the community organizations had a very difficult time recruiting clients who were willing to participate in the interviews. Victim Service providers suggested that clients did not want to discuss difficult or private matters. As such, only four clients were interviewed. The community visits allowed us to observe the capacity of the community and organization to provide services and identify any gaps that may exist in other services.

### Evaluation Considerations and Limitations

The evaluation methodology involved multiple lines of evidence, including both primary and secondary sources of data, which added to the strength of the evaluation findings. However, there are a number of data limitations that should be noted:

- There was limited input from clients of the Program. Only four clients were interviewed as part of the evaluation. Sponsoring organizations, specifically Victim Service providers, had difficulty recruiting clients to participate in the interviews despite the honorarium provided and the flexibility offered in terms of when and how they could provide input. Victim Service providers were offered compensation for their time in recruiting and scheduling interviews. However, that did not increase the overall success in recruiting clients. We made attempts to inform victims about the evaluation through other organizations (e.g. sending formal government letters to organizations that work with victims). This is a more passive form of recruitment because clients would have to reach out to us. Unfortunately, this too resulted in no additional interviews. To address this challenge, we reviewed other studies that included input from NWT victims (e.g. a study on intimate partner violence).

Future studies could consider more collaborative and systemic approach to gathering input from victims. Given their vulnerabilities, victims should be recruited as part of a broader inquiry of services and supports they receive (not just Victim Services). This would create

opportunities to leverage a wider range of sources through which victims could be recruited (e.g. shelters, RCMP, health services). Alternatively, GNWT and service organizations could create a short feedback form that could be available for victims to fill out.

- Although representatives were interviewed from all communities where Victim Service providers are located, our team did not conduct community visits to three communities (as one community organization rescheduled travel multiple times, and two communities lost their Victim Service providers during the course of the evaluation). We were able to conduct telephone interviews with the representatives of these communities.
- Most of the community stakeholders were identified by sponsoring organizations, which increased the risk of positive bias. Some stakeholders were concerned about the confidentiality of responses. This was mitigated by conducting interviews with a wide range of stakeholders across most communities and reassuring participants of the confidentiality of interviews and anonymity in the reporting of findings.
- Reliability of administrative data. Concerns have been raised regarding the reliability of administrative data and the consistency in how data is collected across communities. Any findings based on administrative data should be interpreted with caution. Administrative data is used to show trends over years and provide estimates with respect to clients served and type of clients served. Whenever possible, administrative data was supported by findings from the interviews or literature review.
- Some community stakeholders were not completely familiar with the specifics of the Program and many could not comment on the Program's impact. Their assumptions about certain areas of the services were only used when it was possible to corroborate them through other interviews or lines of evidence.
- It is difficult to assess the impact of the Program or attribute any changes observed specifically to Victim Services given the context in which it operates (e.g. the multitude of other programs, limitations of administrative data, size and scope of the services) and the lack of input from clients. We used different sources of data (NWT-specific statistics, Statistics Canada, literature, interviews) to illustrate the issues raised. Given the limitations of data collected and the various sources used, data presented in the report should be interpreted with caution.

### 1.3 Structure of the Report

The report is divided into four chapters. The next chapter (Chapter 2) provides a brief overview of the Program and its services. Chapter 3 provides a summary of the evaluation findings related to Program responsiveness, achievement of outcomes, Program design and best practices. Chapter 4 provides overall conclusions and recommendations resulting from the evaluation's findings. Please note that, in an effort to minimize the repetitiveness of certain findings, any information, comments or findings related to Program design are presented under the 'Design' section. Similarly, any information regarding recommendations or best practices are presented under the section 'Best Practices and Lessons Learned' with additional details presented in the appendices.

To protect the confidentiality of respondents, we used the following strategy when reporting interview findings:



- 'Key informants interviewed' is used to indicate that a broader group of representatives, including government representatives, provided a similar opinion.
- 'Community stakeholders interviewed' is used to report interview results from the communities. Note that not all comments provided by the community stakeholders apply to all communities.
- 'Victim Service providers' is used to indicate that only this group of interviewees reported something.
- 'RCMP officers' are identified only when the information reported is relevant to their line of work and familiarity with the issues.

Unless otherwise specified, we used the following quantifiers to indicate the level of agreement with the statement among those interviewed:

- 'A few' or 'several' means fewer than 20% of respondents within a particular group or fewer than 5 interviewees;
- 'About a quarter' means between 20% and 25%;
- 'Some' means between 25% and 45% of respondents;
- 'About half' means between 45% and 55% of respondents;
- A 'majority' means between 55% and 75% of respondents; and
- 'Most' means above 75% of respondents.

## 2. PROFILE OF VICTIM SERVICES

### 2.1 Background

The NWT Victim Services Program (VSP) is a community-based program, meaning it is delivered by community organizations, not public servants. It started in the late 1990s with funding for two communities in the NWT, namely Yellowknife and Fort Smith. Since that time, the Program has grown significantly. There are now 11 FTE Victim Service providers in eight communities, serving all 33 communities across the NWT. The Department of Justice Canada is providing about \$3.83 million in funding (including the increase in 2018/19) over five years (2016/17 to 2021/22) to the Government of the Northwest Territories to support victims' access to services. With the contribution of \$705,000 per year plus one full-time coordinator position from the GNWT, the Program operates at a cost of around \$1.5 million per year.

The funding contributed by federal government is allocated toward the following services and Program supports:

- **The Victim Services and Outreach Program** provide services and information throughout the NWT. A variety of services are provided: practical assistance with Victim Impact Statements (VIS); VCEF applications; assistance with applications for No Contact or Emergency Protection Orders; court, police detachment, and health services accompaniment; immediate emergency emotional support to victims and their families; referrals for ongoing community resources; safety planning; and collaboration on federal and territorial justice partner initiatives, such as national awareness weeks. Outreach services are available to all NWT communities through telephone and, when possible, through in-person contact.
- **The Victims of Crime Emergency Fund (VCEF)** is a limited emergency financial assistance program which provides emergency funding to victims to cover costs resulting from crimes. It is not a compensation or restitution fund.
- **Capacity-Building, Public Awareness and Training** involves initiatives undertaken to build the capacity of Victim Service providers through various training activities as well as to update all public education documents about Victim Services to reflect new best practices and legislative changes.
- **Victim Services Personnel** include three positions which provide primary support to Victim Service providers: a manager, a Victim Services Coordinator, and a Canadian Victim Bill of Rights (CVBR) Coordinator. Federal funding contributes 100% of the CVBR position and about 30% and 37% respectively to other two positions. Their roles and responsibilities are as follows:
  - The *Manager, Community Programs* is responsible for the oversight of the advancement of territorial and federal victims' initiatives in the NWT. The Manager is also responsible for the implementation of the legislative and policy framework of the federal government in accordance with the Canadian Victims' Bill of Rights (CVBR). The Manager provides advice to the Department in the development of legislation and policy initiatives that support victims in the NWT.

- The *Coordinator, NWT Victim Services* is the first point of contact for all eight community-based Victim Services Programs in the NWT. This position is responsible for providing support to Victim Services Programs and contributing to the GNWT commitment to build safer communities and support capacity building within communities.
- The *Coordinator, Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* works to enhance the knowledge of, and response to, the provisions of the CVBR by service providers and NWT residents through information sharing and training. Information may be conveyed over the phone, by email, and community travel.

## 2.2 Services and Supports Provided

The objectives of the NWT Victim Services Program are consistent with the objectives of the federal Victim Strategy. The following specific objectives guide the GNWT Program:<sup>1</sup>

- Promote *access to justice*, participation in the justice system and development of programs.
- Enhance the *involvement of non-governmental organizations* in the identification of needs and gaps in services for victims and in the development and delivery of programs, services and assistance to victims, including capacity-building within non-governmental organizations.
- *Promote the implementation of principles, guidelines and laws* designed to address the needs of victims of crime in NWT and make clear their role in the criminal justice system.
- *Contribute to increased knowledge and awareness* of the impacts of victimization, the needs of victims of crime, available services, assistance and programs and legislation across the NWT.

The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR) defines a victim as an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, economic loss or property damage as a result of a crime committed in Canada. Under the CVBR, victims have rights to information, protection, and participation, as well as a right to seek restitution.

### 2.2.1 Victim Services and Outreach Program

#### Victim Services Program Model

The context in which Victim Services are delivered in the NWT is considerably different from most other regions in Canada. Many communities continue to follow a traditional way of life with seasonal hunting, trapping, and fishing being an integral part of community living. The geography and remoteness of the communities presents unique challenges in providing services and supports to victims of crime.

In the NWT, Victim Services are community based, which means that community sponsoring organizations, funded by the GNWT Department of Justice, provide local and regional services to victims of crime. An integral part of a community-based Victim Services Program is that services

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<sup>1</sup> GNWT - Victim Services Community-Based Model Review (2014).



are provided by a trusted member of the local community. Victim Service providers are involved in many of their community activities, and, whenever possible, they may travel to other communities in their region to participate in similar activities. They are often organizers or volunteers with partner organizations, including Community Justice programs, the RCMP, health and wellness providers, and schools. They provide a wide range of services and supports to victims of crime, including information about being a witness (e.g. victims' rights and entitlements); orientation about court processes; shelter and safety planning; practical assistance and support with VCEF applications, victim impact statements (VIS), going to court, the RCMP, and hospitals; and referrals to community resources such as shelters, counselling, etc.

Outreach services are available to all NWT communities through telephone, and when possible, through in-person contact. Victim outreach services are provided to 25 communities outside the eight communities where there is a resident Victim Service provider. Many of these communities do not have road access and are accessible only by air or ice roads in winter. Video conferencing is still limited, and air travel is cost prohibitive. It remains a continued challenge to provide a consistent level of victim services regionally.

As summarized in the following table, there are 8 sponsoring organizations and 10 full-time service providers that serve 33 communities across the NWT.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 4: Sponsoring Organizations and Communities Served**

Sponsoring Organization	Communities Served	Population <sup>3</sup>
Native Women's Association of the NWT (2 full-time Victim Service providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 communities: Yellowknife, Dettah, Łutselk'e and Ndilo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yellowknife (20,607)</li> <li>Total population (21,136)</li> </ul>
K'atl'odeeche First Nation (1.75 full-time Victim Service providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 communities: Hay River, the K'atl'odeeche First Nation, Enterprise, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution and Kakisa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hay River (3,824)</li> <li>Total population (5,235)</li> </ul>
Inuvik Justice Committee (2 full-time Victim Service providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 communities: Inuvik, Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inuvik (3,536)</li> <li>Total population (6,880)</li> </ul>
K'asho Got'ine Charter Community (1 full-time Victim Service provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fort Good Hope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fort Good Hope (570)</li> <li>Total population (2,637)</li> </ul>
Tulita Dene Band Council (1 full-time Victim Service provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tulita</li> </ul>	
Tłı̨chǫ Government (1 full time Victim Service provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 communities: Behchokò, Gamètì, Wekweètì and Whatì</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total population (2,944)</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Per the latest annual report (2018/19).

<sup>3</sup> NWT Bureau of Statistics (2019), Population Estimates by Community, <https://www.statsnwt.ca/population/population-estimates/bycommunity.php>.

Sponsoring Organization	Communities Served	Population <sup>3</sup>
Liidlii Kue First Nation (1 full time Victim Service provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 communities: Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Sambaa K'e and Wrigley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fort Simpson (1,296)</li> <li>Total population (2,224)</li> </ul>
Fort Smith Métis Council (1 full-time Victim Service provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fort Smith</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total population (2,709)</li> </ul>

Source: GNWT VSP Annual Report (2018/19); NWT Bureau of Statistics

## Clients Served

In 2019, the population of the Northwest Territories was 44,598. The NWT has a diverse population, including Indigenous people, non-Indigenous people, and newcomers to Canada. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people each comprise close to 50% of the NWT's population. The NWT has 11 official languages: Chipewyan, Cree, Tłıchǫ, Gwich'in, North Slavey, South Slavey, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, French, and English. Many elders speak only their Indigenous language and require translation by family or community members.

According to Program administrative data, over the four years from 2015/16 to 2018/19, there were over 2,500 new victims assisted by the Program. A client was considered 'new' if they did not receive services from the Program within a reporting year. The total number of clients (including brief contacts and continuing cases) has increased from 3,586 in 2015/16 to 5,820 in 2018/19. In particular, the number of brief service contacts has doubled over the years (representing more than half of all client cases), while the number of new clients has remained relatively stable.

**Table 5: Types of Clients (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Client Type	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Brief Service Contacts	1,580	44%	2,290	53%	4,155	68%	3,154	54%	11,179	56%
New Clients	636	18%	595	14%	633	10%	659	11%	2,523	13%
Continuing Cases	1,370	38%	1,432	33%	1,329	22%	2,007	34%	6,138	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,586</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,317</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,117</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,820</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,840</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Program Administrative Data (2015/16-2018/19)

### 2.2.2 Victims of Crime Emergency Fund

The VCEF provides emergency funds for victims in need, which may cover accommodations (coverage for the required time needed to provide for victims' emergency need, recommended at two nights at \$400 per victim); meals per GNWT duty travel guidelines; transportation (no maximum benefits, minimum travel distance of 50km); child and elder care (\$50/day); home repair, including emergency repairs for items such as broken doors, windows, and locks; clean-up following serious crime; counselling services (up to six sessions subject to approved extensions by the Department); and medical expenses at the discretion of the Department.

Administering the VCEF Program involves the following:

- Assessing victims' eligibility



- Coordinating the provision of emergency services to the victims; and
- Issuing payment to service providers.

## Eligibility Requirements

The NWT Victims of Crime Emergency Fund Report (2012) provides terminology that was used in designing the fund to ensure a common understanding of definitions and requirements:

- A victim is defined as someone who has suffered (intentional) emotional and/or physical harm and/or serious damage to property as the result of a serious violent crime.
- A secondary victim includes family members who experienced the immediate traumatic effect on primary victims. In the context of a serious violent crime against a child or significant other, a secondary victim could be an immediate family member such as spouse, parent, guardian, child, sister, brother, grandparent or other extended family member as determined by the Manager, NWT Victim Services.

In the event that multiple individuals are victimized by the same criminal offense, each victim may be eligible for full VCEF benefits. When the victim is a child under 18 years of age, a primary caregiver will be fully eligible for funding assistance to provide the minor with the emergency funding assistance covered under this Program. A caregiver would also be eligible in the event that the victim is over 18 or is elderly and has a special need or requires special assistance.

The fact sheet for the NWT Victims of Crime Emergency Fund provides the following definitions and eligibility requirements for the fund:<sup>4</sup>

- Definition of victim: A person who has suffered intentional emotional or physical harm and/or serious damage to property as a result of a serious violent crime.
- Victim eligibility: Victims of serious violent crime that took place in NWT; parents or guardians of victims. A member of the victim's immediate family can apply on behalf of the victim and a Victim Service provider can apply on behalf of the victim when no immediate family is available to do so. Victims of minor crimes are not eligible.
- Crimes are that are covered: The fund covers homicide, assault (sexual, spousal or partner), forcible confinement, and other situations which might have a traumatic or physical impact on victims.
- Expenses covered: The fund covers a number of expenses including short-term counselling, crime scene clean-up, limited emergency accommodation, limited emergency food, some emergency repairs to the victim's residence to ensure safety, and some medical or dental expenses directly related to the crime.
- Expenses not covered: The fund does not cover lost wages, compensation for physical or emotional suffering, injuries from motor vehicles accidents not resulting from serious crime, stolen items, or crime-related expenses from crimes that happened outside of NWT.

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<sup>4</sup> GNWT, VCEF Fact Sheet, <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/victims-of-crime-emergency-fund/Emergency%20Fund%20Fund%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>.

The sponsoring organizations, specifically Victim Services coordinators and providers, assist clients to apply for emergency funds. The annual budget available for the VCEF is \$77,000.

### 2.2.3 Public Awareness, Capacity-Building and Training

In addition to serving clients directly, the Program is intended to build up the capacity and leadership of Victim Service providers through various training initiatives and by developing and updating public education documents about Victim Services to reflect new best practices and legislative changes. The Community Justice and Policing Division supports communities in developing and implementing sustainable local justice programming.

Training and other capacity-building events are collaborative efforts and training may come from various sources. Some examples of the activities and trainings funded over the past few years include:

- During the 2017–2018 fiscal year, four major training events took place along with several regularly offered training sessions. NWT Victim Services provided child witness court preparation and court accompaniment training through the Canadian Child Abuse Association to all Victim Service providers and a few Crown witness coordinators with Public Prosecutions Canada. Community Justice provided three regional capacity-building workshops. The focus was to improve how Community Justice programs engage with victims with a booster session on the victim-offender conferencing model of restorative justice.
- In 2018-19, initiatives included support for family members of victims of homicide (Native Women's Association of the NWT), family violence awareness events (Status of Women Council of the NWT), self-care bag distribution (Status of Women Council of the NWT, Department of Health and Social Services, RCMP), Victim Survives and Community Justice Committee collaborative training.

Sponsoring organizations, specifically Victim Service providers, plan, organize and implement community-based events and public awareness and education initiatives that range from presentations at high schools to joint events with the RCMP and other community organizations.

### Mental Health Support for NWT Victim Service Providers

In April 2018, Justice Canada amended the *Victims of Crime Funding Agreement, A Framework for Enhancing Victim Services in the NWT*, to include mental health support for Victim Service providers. This amendment followed requests from the GNWT to include these supports in the funding agreement. This special funding is available to assist in four areas:

- To enable Victim Service providers to access immediate mental health support when dealing with vicarious trauma in their work.
- To promote the development of a peer support network via teleconference throughout the year.
- To provide a full day once a year for (a) mental health professional(s) to facilitate education and information on best practices for vicarious trauma/self-care.
- To facilitate debriefing session(s) as required.

## 2.4 Partners and Stakeholders

To deliver services, the Department of Justice's Community Justice and Policing Division and sponsoring organizations partner with agencies like the RCMP, Community Justice Committees (restorative justice), health centers, health and wellness coordinators, schools, municipal and Indigenous governments, housing, and other community organizations and community leadership.

Victim Service providers work with the partners and stakeholders to:

- Refer clients to appropriate services and receive referrals
- Plan and implement community awareness events
- Build capacity of communities to support victims of crime
- Prevent crime
- Engage in interagency collaboration to align services and reduce duplication

The following is a description of the justice service partners in the NWT:<sup>5</sup>

### Policing

Policing is provided by the RCMP through a policing services agreement between the GNWT and Public Safety Canada. Each community has an opportunity to influence policing priorities specific to their community needs through policing action plans. The policing action plans are jointly developed by the RCMP and community leadership based on the specific needs of each community, taking into consideration the available financial and human resources.

### Role of Public Prosecution Services (PPSC) in the NWT

In the NWT, nearly all *Criminal Code* offences are prosecuted by the PPSC, which is the federal prosecution service. In provinces, criminal prosecution falls under the jurisdiction of the provincial Crown. This means that the GNWT has less input into when and how offenders are prosecuted compared to the provinces.

### Alternative Justice

There are two specialized courts in the NWT: a Wellness Court and a Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court (DVTO). These courts are alternatives to conventional court, focus on the offender and their underlying reasons for offending, and incorporate rehabilitation into the court process. The Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court allows people who have used violence against a spouse or partner to take responsibility for their behavior by entering a guilty plea, and then to receive support and counselling before they are sentenced. Prior to sentencing, the Program provides intervention by a team to help educate the participants on healthy relationships for the long term. The Program is delivered over the course of eight weeks and participants are required to

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<sup>5</sup> GNWT (2019). National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Closing Submissions of the Government of the Northwest Territories. GNWT: Yellowknife. <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Govt-NWT-Final-Written-Submission.pdf>

attend one two-hour group session each week. After successful completion of the Program, the sentencing judge takes into consideration the participant's meaningful steps to making long-term change.

The DVTO Court was first implemented in Yellowknife in 2011 and has since expanded to Hay River and Behchokq. The Wellness Court Program is a judicially supervised court program designed to address the conditions that may contribute to re-offending. Like the DVTO, it also requires offenders to take responsibility by entering a guilty plea and then allows for intervention before the sentencing stage. Program participants have underlying mental health problems, addictions, or cognitive challenges that contribute to their criminal behaviour, resulting in repeat offending and recurring jail sentences. The purpose of the Wellness Court Program is to help these offenders to move beyond re-offending and to successfully integrate into their communities.

## 2.5 Budget and Expenses

The Department of Justice Canada provided \$3.75 million over five years (2016/17 to 2020/21), or \$750,000 annually, to the Government of the Northwest Territories to support victims' access to services. In 2018/19, the contribution agreement was amended to include an additional \$25,600 annually for mental health support for NWT Victim Service providers. The federal contribution includes funding for the Outreach Victim Service Program (to enhance existing Victim Services Programs that serve remote communities), implementation of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (to help victims prepare impact statements, provide testimony and apply for restitution), the Victims of Crime Emergency Fund, Victim Services staff, and training and publications. The funding supports 11 FTE Victim Services positions.

The following table summarizes funding allocated to the eight communities providing direct Victim Services and the federal government's contribution to the Victim Outreach Program and other supports.

**Table 6: Program Expenditures**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Annual Contribution</b>	<b>Total (5-years)</b>
<b>Victim Services (11 FTEs) – NWT Contribution (\$75,000/annually)</b>	<b>\$825,000</b>	<b>\$4,125,000</b>
<b>Federal Contribution</b>		
NWT Outreach Program (Admin Fee, Salaries/Benefits for Inuvik and Hay River, enhancement of existing 8 programs)	<b>\$288,750</b>	<b>\$1,443,750</b>
Canadian Victims Bill of Rights	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$1,250,000</b>
Victims of Crime Emergency Fund (VCEF)	<b>\$77,000</b>	<b>\$385,000</b>
Victim Services Capacity Building, Public Awareness, Attendance at National Specialized Training	<b>\$59,250</b>	<b>296,250</b>
Mental Health Support for NWT Victim Service Providers	<b>\$25,600</b>	<b>76,800 (3 years)</b>
Victim Services Staff (Manager and Coordinator)	<b>75,000</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>
<b>Total Federal Contribution</b>	<b>775,600*</b>	<b>3,826,800</b>

Source: Contribution Agreement (2015/16 to 2020/2021) \*\$750,000 prior to 2018/19

## 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### 3.1 Responsiveness of the VSP to the Victims of Crime

This section presents evaluation findings regarding need for the services, Program responsiveness with respect to characteristics of the victims served and types of crime, and types of services provided by the Program.

#### 3.1.1 Victims of Police-Reported Crimes

**There is a significant need for Victim Services across the Northwest Territories as evidenced by high rate of police-reported crime.**

According to Statistics Canada, crime rates in Northwest Territories are significantly higher than elsewhere in Canada. Although high rates of crime in small populations like that of the NWT essentially reflect a small relative number of violations, the crime rates are useful comparative indicators of crime in a population. For example, the crime rate per 100,000 people in the NWT is 42,303, much higher than the 5,488 in Canada overall.<sup>6</sup> The violent crime rate in the NWT is about 7 times higher than the national average, while the rate of sexual assault was nearly 5 times higher than the national average. Similarly, the total property crime rate for the NWT was 20,799 per 100,000 compared to 3,338.8 for Canada.

**Table 7: Criminal Code Offences in the NWT & Canada, 2018**

Offences (2018)	NWT	Canada
<i>Criminal Code Offences</i> <sup>7</sup>	42,302.6	5,488.4
Crimes of Violence <sup>8</sup>	8,670.7	1,143.5
Homicide	13.5	1.8
Attempted Murder	2.3	2.2
Assaults (levels 1 to 3) <sup>9</sup>	6113.5	611.7
Sexual assault (levels 1 to 3)	368.2	77.6
Total Property Crimes	20,798.8	3,338.8
Total Robbery	83.1	60.6
Breaking and Entering	1003.6	431.2

Source: [Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2018](#)

The following tables provide a summary of the types of police-reported crime over time and by region:

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada (2019), "[Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2018.](#)"

<sup>7</sup> Excluding traffic offences.

<sup>8</sup> "Crimes of Violence" include all violent crimes listed by category on subsequent lines: homicide; attempted murder; assaults; sexual assaults; other sexual offences; and, other crimes of violence (e.g. uttering threats, criminal harassment and forcible confinement).

<sup>9</sup> "Assault level 1" is the first level of assault. It constitutes the intentional application of force without consent, the attempt or threat to apply force to another person, or openly wearing a weapon (or an imitation) while accosting or impeding another person.

- Over the four years, the number of recorded Criminal Code violations has decreased somewhat, from about 19,200 incidents in 2014 to just over 18,000 in 2016, before increasing to about 18,800 in 2018. However, violent crime has been increasing steadily, from just over 3,000 in 2014 to over 3,800 in 2018.

**Table 8: Numbers and Rates of Criminal Code Violations reported by the RCMP, NWT (2014-2018)**

Criminal Code Violations	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	#	Rates	#	Rates	#	Rates	#	Rates	#	Rates
<b>All violations</b>	19,219	453	19,629	459	18,058	422	18,373	434	18,842	449
<b>Violent crime</b>	3,041	69	3,400	77	3,485	78	3,782	84	3,862	87
<b>Property Crime</b>	10,132	231	10,337	234	9,197	206	8,870	197	9,264	208
<b>Other violations</b>	6,046	138	5,892	133	5,376	120	5,721	127	5,716	128

Source: <https://www.statsnwt.ca/justice/police-reported-crime/index.html>

- Although Yellowknife has the highest number of all Criminal Code violations, the Tłı̄chǫ region has by far the highest incidence rate (nearly four times the rate of Yellowknife). Tłı̄chǫ also had the highest crime rate for each subcategory of criminal offence. The Beaufort Delta region has the second-highest overall crime rate.

**Table 9: Numbers and Rates of Criminal Code Violations by Region, NWT (2018)**

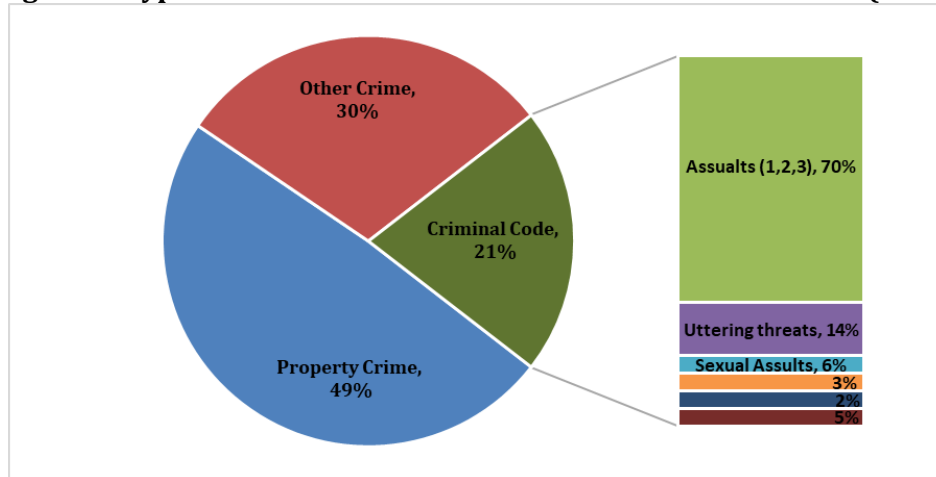
	All Criminal Code Violations		Crimes of Violence		Property Crime		Other Criminal Code violations	
	#	Rates	#	Rates	#	Rates	#	Rates
<b>Tłı̄chǫ</b>	3,002	1,005	544	182	1,417	475	779	261
<b>Yellowknife</b>	6,330	299	857	41	2,981	141	2,152	102
<b>Beaufort Delta</b>	4,793	702	1,003	147	2,219	325	1,268	186
<b>Dehcho</b>	1,856	558	526	158	762	229	403	121
<b>Sahtu</b>	1,542	586	315	120	683	259	367	139
<b>South Slave</b>	2,830	377	617	82	1,202	160	747	100

Source: <https://www.statsnwt.ca/justice/police-reported-crime/index.html>

- In 2018, half of violations were property crime related. Of *Criminal Code* violations, 70% were assaults (levels 1, 2 and 3), followed by uttering threats (14%) and sexual assaults, including sexual violations against children (6%).



**Figure 1: Types of Common Criminal Code Violations in the NWT (2018)**



Source: <https://www.statsnwt.ca/justice/police-reported-crime/index.html>

**Victim Services Program clients are reflective of the types of crime mostly commonly reported by police. The distribution of clients served across regions is not necessarily reflective of the regional distribution of crime.**

As illustrated in the following tables:

- Of clients served in the four years from 2015/16 to 2018/19 for whom the type of crime was recorded, nearly half (45%) were victims of assault, followed by victims of sexual assault (16%). This varies somewhat across communities. For example, in the South Slave region, victims of assault accounted for nearly two thirds of all victims served, while victims of sexual assault accounted for nearly half of those served in the Beaufort Delta region.

**Table 10: Types of Violent Offences (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Type of Violent Offence	Total (2015/16-2018/19)	
	Count	Percentage
Assault	1,370	45%
Sexual Assault	472	16%
Family difficulty, civil, residential school abuse	297	10%
Confinement, harassment, threats	249	8%
Suicide and Sudden deaths	158	5%
Firearms, Homicide, Robbery	103	3%
Break & enter	53	2%
Other	313	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,015</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Program administrative data (2015/16 -2018/19)

- Of all new clients served over the four years, most were in the Yellowknife region (38%), followed by the Beaufort Delta and South Slave regions. Overall, most clients were served in the South Slave region, followed by Sahtu. Tłı̄chǫ, which had the highest crime rate, only served 10% of total new clients.

**Table 11: Types of Clients by Region (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Region	Brief Service Contacts		New Clients		Continuing Cases		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yellowknife	1,918	17%	950	38%	423	7%	3,291	17%
Beaufort Delta	276	2%	489	19%	3,016	49%	3,781	19%
South Slave	3,732	33%	444	18%	2,214	36%	6,390	32%
Tłı̨chǫ	691	6%	257	10%	29	0.5%	977	5%
Dehcho	883	8%	207	8%	201	3%	1,291	7%
Sahtu	3,679	33%	176	7%	255	4%	4,110	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,179</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,523</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,138</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,840</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Program administrative data (2015/16 - 2018/19)

### 3.1.2 Family Violence

**Police-reported family violence crimes are particularly high in the NWT. The majority of family violence victims are victims of intimate partner violence and are more likely to be Indigenous women.**

While there is no universal definition of family violence, the federal Family Violence initiative defines it as “a range of abusive behaviours that occur within relationships based on kinship, intimacy, dependency or trust” (Family Violence Initiative 2010, p. 1). Abusive behaviours can be physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or financial. Neglect can also constitute an abusive behaviour. Official family violence data are generally reported by type of relationship and type of crime. When reporting family violence data, Statistics Canada defines family as “relationships defined through blood, marriage, co-habitation (in the case of common-law partners), foster care, or adoption.”<sup>10</sup> Police-reported incidents of family violence usually involve criminal offences such as assault, criminal harassment, sexual offences or homicide.

Family violence represented about one-third (34%) of all incidents of violent crime reported in 2018.<sup>11</sup> The following table provides a breakdown of police-reported family violence statistics by type of relationship. As illustrated, the rates are significantly higher in the NWT than in the rest of Canada across all type of relationships. Both in NWT and Canada overall, the rate of family violence for females was higher than for males.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 12: Police-reported incidents and rates of Family Violence, NWT and Canada (2018)**

Police-reported family violence (2018)	NWT Incidents and Rates						Canada Rates		
	Female Victims		Male Victims		Total Rate		Female Victims	Male Victims	Total Rate
	#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate			
IPV	922	5,396	221	1,210	1,143	3,233	507	134	322
Seniors	26	1,625	25	1,371	51	1,490	73	60	67

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada (2014) “Overview of Family Violence”

<sup>11</sup> There were 1,321 incidents of family violence in NWT in 2018 and 3,862 all incidents of violent crime reported by the police.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada (2019), “Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2018”  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00018-eng.htm>.

Children and youth	88	1,647	39	723	127	1,182	324	206	264
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Source: Statistics Canada (2019), "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2018"

With respect to the NWT specifically, data shows that:

- *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is higher than other types of family violence, women are 4.5 times more likely to be its victims, and Indigenous women are significantly overrepresented.* Intimate partner violence includes violent offences which occur between current and former legal spouses, common-law partners, boyfriends and girlfriends, and other intimate partners. In the NWT, the crime rate for IPV is 2 to 3 times higher than violence against children and youth and violence against seniors. Victims of IPV in the territory who reported to police totalled 1,143 in 2018, which corresponds to a rate of 3,233 per 100,000. This is 12% greater than the rate from 2017. Women are 4.5 times more likely to be the victims of IPV than men.<sup>13,14</sup> In 2014, Indigenous people represented three-quarters of victims of spousal violence in the territories. Further, 93% of individuals who suffered the most severe forms of spousal violence (e.g. being beaten, choked, sexually assaulted, threatened with a weapon) were Indigenous<sup>15</sup>.
- *Senior victims are more likely to be women and to be victimized by their spouse.* According to Statistics Canada (2019), male victims of elder abuse were more likely to be victimized by their child, while female victims were more likely to be victimized by their spouse. In the NWT, 51 seniors were victims of family violence in 2018, at the rate of 1,490 senior victims per 100,000, which represents a 27% increase from the previous year.
- *Children and youth are most often victimized by a parent; girls continue to be two times more likely to be victims, although the rate of boy victims is rising more rapidly.* In Canada, children and youth who experience family violence are most often victimized by a parent (53%). Further, over 90% of child and youth victims of police-reported family violence live with the person who victimized them. Girls continue to be the over two times more likely to be the victims of family violence; however, the rate from 2017 to 2018 among boys increased by 40% versus 15% for girls in the NWT.

According to the literature, there are higher rates of police-reported family violence among Indigenous people and women in rural areas. For example, for children and youth, the family violence rate was almost twice as high in rural areas than urban areas of Canada in 2018 (Statistics Canada, 2019). This was similarly the case for intimate partner violence, with a rate of 499 per 100,000 in rural areas compared to 284 per 100,000 in urban areas. Women in rural areas experienced the highest overall rates of IPV.

**The clients served by the Program are reflective of victims' profiles in police-reported crimes. Specifically, over two-thirds of victims served over the last four years were**

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada (2019), "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2018."

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00018-eng.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada (2018), "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2017."

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54978-eng.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Perreault, S. & Simpson, L. (2016). Criminal victimization in the territories, 2014. (Component of Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X). Ottawa: Statistics Canada; 2012.



### Indigenous and over 80% were female. Some challenges were identified with respect to serving youth and elders.

According to Program administrative data and interviews conducted, clients served are reflective of victims in police-reported crimes. For example:

- Between 74% and 88% of clients served over the four years were reported as Indigenous in Program administrative data. In larger communities such as Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Hay River, the percentage of Indigenous clients accounted for 60% to 75% of the total number of victims over the last four years. In smaller communities, almost all clients served were Indigenous (more than 90%). Most community representatives across all communities confirmed that victims are significantly more likely to be Indigenous.

**Table 13: Client Ethnicity (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Ethnicity	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indigenous	448	74%	471	79%	506	75%	625	88%
Non-Indigenous	49	8%	45	8%	56	8%	19	3%
Not Recorded	105	17%	83	14%	111	16%	63	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Program administrative data (2015/16 -2018/19)

- Over 80% of new clients served by the Program were female. The gender ratio remained consistent over the years. Victim Service providers noted that some men may not access services because they are culturally less likely to disclose abuse or talk about personal issues, particularly to a woman (all but one of the Victim Service providers and coordinators were female; currently all providers are female).

**Table 14: Client Gender (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Gender	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	108	16%	119	20%	97	15%	123	18%
Female	550	84%	485	80%	536	85%	542	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Program administrative data (2015/16 -2018/19)

- Almost all clients served are adults (over 85%). The percentage of adult, child, and youth victims has been consistent over the last four years. However, there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of elderly victims, from 7% in 2015/16 to 1% in 2018/19. Interviewed stakeholders and Victim Service providers suggested that younger victims of crime and elders are much harder to reach due to being more dependent on others and are less likely to be aware of Victim Services and how the services may be helpful to them. Some noted that elders who have been victims of violence can be reluctant to disclose such abuse because their perpetrators are often family members on whom they rely. According to some community stakeholders and Victim Service providers, elders are more likely to have normalized family violence and require more outreach and education on the how to recognize the family quarrels from family abuse and the dynamics of family violence what supports exist for them and how to access those support,). Further, Indigenous elders are more likely to experience language barriers when it comes to accessing services.

**Table 15: Age Distribution of Clients (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Age Group	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Adult	554	84%	555	92%	533	84%	602	89%
Elder/Senior	46	7%	20	3%	16	3%	10	1%
Youth	55	8%	25	4%	67	11%	56	8%
Child	6	1%	4	1%	17	3%	6	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Program administrative data (2015/16 -2018/19)

**Immigrants account for less than 10% of the total NWT population and most are settled in Yellowknife. Little is known about the crime rates among immigrant groups in NWT.**

According to the 2016 census, immigrants account for approximately 9% of the Northwest Territories' total population. Of the 3,690 immigrants in the territory identified by the census, 2,870 (78%) lived in Yellowknife.<sup>16</sup> According to literature, immigrants experience violent crime at half the rate of the non-immigrant population (39 per 1,000 vs. 86 per 1,000).<sup>17</sup> One study looked at the changes in property crime rates in the communities where immigrants tend to settle as an indicator of crime among immigrant groups. The study shows immigrants settling in communities not only does not result in higher property crime rates but that a 10% increase in immigrant share of a community is associated with a reduction in the property crime rate on the order of 2% to 3%.<sup>18</sup>

Data on crime committed against immigrants in the NWT is limited. Some key informants noted that immigrants are generally less likely to use mainstream services and may be less likely to report crime to the police. Although there is some evidence that immigrants might be less likely to access mainstream services such as police or victims service programs,<sup>19</sup> the 2014 General Social Survey found that immigrants were more likely to report crime than non-immigrants (53% of immigrants in Canada who experienced violent victimization did not bring the crime to the police while 69% of non-immigrant victims did not).

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada (2016) Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census: Northwest Territories. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-pr-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&GK=PR&GC=61&TOPIC=7>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibrahim, D. (2018). "Violent victimization, discrimination and perceptions of safety: An immigrant perspective, Canada, 2014,". Statistics Canada, 2018. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54911-eng.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> Zhang, H. (2014) "Immigrants and crime: Evidence from Canada". CSLRN Working Paper Series, Working paper no. 135. Vancouver: UBC. <https://crdcn.org/immigrants-and-crime-evidence-canada>.

<sup>19</sup> Lee, Y.S. & Hadeed, L. (2009) "Intimate partner violence among Asian immigrant communities: Health/mental health consequences, help-seeking behaviors, and service utilization". Trauma, Violence, and Abuse. Volume, 10:143-170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838009334130>.

There were some concerns raised by community stakeholders about the Program's efforts to reach immigrant communities, particularly in Yellowknife. Stakeholders commented on the lack of Program activities specifically tailored to immigrants. For example, there is general lack of awareness or public education activities directly reaching out to immigrant populations, particularly Muslim women who may feel isolated particularly if their knowledge of English is limited. Anecdotal evidence suggests that knowledge of the service is particularly low among immigrant populations. Some representatives also noted that, depending on the country of origin, trust in law enforcement and government services can be low among some immigrant groups.

### 3.1.4 Under-Reported Crimes

**Key informants across all communities suggested that unreported family violence is prevalent in the NWT due to a wide range of factors, including stigma and isolation, socio-economic factors, and the negative impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities.**

While police-reported family violence statistics provide us with some understanding of who the victims of crime are, the literature suggests that a significant portion of family violence is underreported. For example, evidence from the 2009 General Social Survey (GSS) indicates that fewer than three in ten (29%) incidents of violent victimization are reported to police.<sup>20</sup> Findings from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics suggest that, in 2014, fewer than one in five (19%) persons who had been abused by their spouse reported the abuse to police.<sup>21</sup>

There are many reasons for underreported family violence. In 2007, the NWT Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey measuring attitudes towards family violence in which they asked participants about the reasons victims of family violence do not seek help. The top three reasons identified included fear of the person who is abusing them (91%), not wanting anyone to find out (85%), and considering the incident to be a personal matter that does not concern others (62%).<sup>22</sup>

Most key informants, particularly RCMP officers, also believe that a significant amount of family-related crime and abuse is not reported to the police. The following are the most common reasons identified by key informants:

- **Feelings of shame and stigma related to being labelled a victim.** Those working directly with victims (Victim Service providers, RCMP officers, and community stakeholders), highlighted the enduring stigma of being labelled a victim and the shame associated with it. This was reported to be particularly true for victims of sexual assault. Literature has shown that stigma negatively impacts victims' likelihood of seeking

*"There's stigma in accessing Victim Services, in people knowing you're using the service... I had one experience where a victim did a statement and got a hard time in the community afterwards, they were kind of shunned. This varies across communities depending on the supportiveness. It's especially an issue around sexual assault, there's a lot of shame." – Community stakeholder Interview*

<sup>20</sup> Perreault, S. & Brennan, S (2010) "Criminal victimization in Canada, 2009." Juristat, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X Summer 2010. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2010002/article/11340-eng.htm#a11>.

<sup>21</sup> Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (2016). "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014." Juristat, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. 4.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.statsnwt.ca/justice/attitudes-family-violence/07%20Family%20Violence%20Report.pdf>.

help from both formal and informal support networks.<sup>23</sup> Some key informants reported that men experiencing family violence are even more vulnerable to feelings of stigma and shame due to cultural norms. Research on men's experience of abuse is scarce, but the existing literature suggests men face specific barriers to accessing support, with some reports of ridicule and dismissive attitudes from police and domestic violence agencies.<sup>24</sup> The stigma around the words "victim" and "victimization" extends to individuals' willingness to reach out for help and access services through the Program. Part of this shame stems from the belief that others in the community will gossip or pass judgement.

- **Socio-economic factors and isolation.** Some Victim Service providers noted that poverty, housing, and education also play an important role in victims' ability and willingness to report crime or access available services. Victim Service providers pointed out that clients often do not want to report incidents of family violence because they are financially reliant on their partners. Community stakeholders reported, and a few clients confirmed, that victims, particularly women, often remain in abusive relationships because they cannot leave the community or have no place to go (their entire support system is in the community), do not want to destroy the family, and have no financial resources to support the family without their partners, who function as breadwinners. Some key informants highlighted the low levels of literacy as a barrier to understanding the system of support that is available to victims.
- **Lasting impact of colonization and normalization of violence.** Most key informants talked about the well-documented intergenerational trauma and impacts of colonization (and, in particular, residential schools), which have contributed towards high rates of alcoholism and drug use, distrust of government organizations and services, and normalization of violence. Various studies reported on the impact of residential schools towards an intergenerational cycle of violence and its acceptance, and the ongoing mistrust of government and the mainstream justice system.<sup>25</sup>

Most stakeholders acknowledged the prevalence of family violence in their communities, particularly with regards to violence against women. Victim Service providers highlighted the frequency of cases related to sexual assault. Substance abuse was considered a root cause of much of the recurring family violence and crime.

**Given the level of RCMP and Crown referrals to the VSP, we can assume that an average of about two-thirds of new victims served annually have reported the incidents. Many communities reported serving more 'continuing cases' than new clients, of whom many were presumed to victims of under-reported crimes.**

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<sup>23</sup> Overstreet, N. & Quinn, D. (2013) "The Intimate Partner Violence Stigmatization Model and Barriers to Help-Seeking." *Basic and applied social psychology* vol. 35,1: 109-122. doi:10.1080/01973533.2012.746599.

<sup>24</sup> Douglas, E.M, & Hines, D.A. (2011) "The Helpseeking Experiences of Men Who Sustain Intimate Partner Violence: An Overlooked Population and Implications for Practice." *Journal of family violence* vol. 26,6: 473-485. doi:10.1007/s10896-011-9382-4.

<sup>25</sup> Fikowski, H & Moffitt, P. (2018) "A Culture of violence and silence in remote Canada: Impacts of service delivery to address intimate partner violence." In H. Exner-Pirot, B. Norbye, & L. Butler (Eds.), *Northern and Indigenous Health and Healthcare*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: University of Saskatchewan.

Victim Services and supports are commonly provided to any individual who needs it, regardless of whether the crime was reported to the police. Some Victim Service providers noted that victims may approach them first to get information about what to do regarding their situation and find out what their options are if they report the crime. A few also noted that they would provide their clients with all necessary information and referrals without judgement, and although they may encourage clients to report the incidents, it is a decision that each client must make.

Although Victim Services providers do not keep track of number of victims served that have reported crimes to the police, the referrals from the RCMP and Crown indicate that between half and two-thirds of new clients have reported the incidents. The RCMP has consistently been the source of the highest number of referrals to the VSP. The proportion of referrals made by the RCMP has been increasing over the last four years.

**Table 16: Source of Referrals (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Referrals	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>RCMP</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Crown</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5%</b>
Self	200	30%	168	28%	138	22%	133	20%
Social Service Agencies (e.g. Social, Legal, Victim, CJC service agencies)	44	7%	28	5%	17	3%	16	2%
Shelter/Medical/Drug & Alcohol	20	3%	35	6%	20	3%	13	2%
Other	39	6%	24	4%	20	3%	30	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Program administrative data (2015/16 -2018/19)

Over the four years, communities reported serving over 6,000 of continuing cases, representing an average of close to a third of all cases served annually. The number of continuing cases ranges across communities; in the aggregate, five communities reported more continuing cases than new clients. According to some interviews, continuing cases are often victims who have suffered repeated incidents of family violence or abuse, many of which have not been reported to the police.

### 3.1.4 Responsiveness of VSP Services

**The Program is generally responsive to clients' needs, particularly with respect to helping them navigate the system, referring them to appropriate services, providing information, and assisting with the immediate safety concerns of those who seek out help.**

When asked about the common needs that victims have, a large majority of key informants identified the need for information, system navigation (court process and referrals), emotional support, and safety. Other needs identified were related to community services (such as mental health support, shelters, housing, childcare, financial support, economic opportunities, etc.).

With respect to the Program's responsiveness to victims' needs, most key informants agreed that the Program is generally responsive to client needs in the following areas:

- **System navigation and referrals.** Victim Service providers help their clients navigate the system and access appropriate services. They consider this to be a major part of their role. The administrative data show that an average of 2,500 services related to system



navigation and referrals are provided annually. This includes providing direct referrals to other services, advocating on behalf of clients (e.g. crisis intervention, accompanying victims to other services, helping them fill out forms and VIS, court preparation, consultations with RCMP or Crown, etc.), providing transportation and other assistance.

- **Information needs.** Victim Service providers deliver over 2,000 information-related services annually, representing more than a third of all services provided. Although there are some differences in how communities record information services in their administrative data reporting, those interviewed suggested that the most common information services relate to legal information (e.g. definitions, laws, rights), information about victims' rights (restitution funds, Victim Notification programs, right to testimonial aids, and any other rights under the Victim Bill of Rights), and information about the court process (e.g. clarifying laws regarding the age of consent for high schoolers) and stages of the court process. In one case, the Victim Service provider described a flow chart they use with victims to help them make sense of the court process. The flow chart explained what happens at each step in the process and the different ways cases can proceed based on decisions made at each step.
- **Responding to safety concerns.** Victim Services are perceived to be responsive to the safety concerns of those who seek out help through the VCEF and safety planning. There were over 550 VCEF forms filled out by Victim Service providers over the past four years. The administration of funds is timely and responsive (funds are commonly disbursed within 24 hours). Funds provide victims with access to tools (such as cell phones and calling minutes) so they can call for help and access basic necessities (e.g. emergency food and clothing). Victim Service providers also talked about helping their clients create a safety plan that is tailored to their individual needs and situations. For example, they would help clients think about preparing an emergency bag of supplies, where to keep emergency money, writing down instructions for children, using a safe word, etc.
- **Providing emotional support.** One of the most commonly identified and most appreciated aspect of the Program is emotional support provided to victims. Emotional support services account for over 24% of all services reported in administrative data. Nearly all delivery organization representatives and most other stakeholders recognized the importance of the role Victim Service providers play in offering emotional support during some of the most stressful and anxious times for individuals who have been victimized. Respondents stressed the importance of supporting women, and particularly young girls, who have been sexually victimized and are scared, unsure what to do and where to go. Accompaniment to health services was often provided as an example of much needed and appreciated support by victims. The Victim Service providers are also perceived as having a unique ability to provide emotional support to victims because they are not obligated to share any information received from victims to authorities the way that RCMP officers must. A few victims interviewed reported that having someone to talk to who will listen, not judge them, and provide encouragement was very important to them.

**However, limited Program capacity to reach victims and provide in-person and timely access to supports present a major barrier in meeting victims' needs across communities and various demographics.**



Delivering services in the NWT is uniquely challenging. The territory is sparsely populated and has many remote or isolated communities. In addition, travel in the North is very expensive and the distances between communities are large. Access to communities differs across the territory. For example, 14 communities are on a road system, while the remaining communities are accessible in the winter only by ice roads or plane.<sup>26</sup>

Victim Service providers are commonly available in eight regional communities, which leaves nearly a quarter of the NWT population without direct access to Victim Services. Most key informants highlighted this limited access to in-person services as problematic, particularly for those requiring emotional support. Stakeholders from the outreach communities reported having very little interaction with the Victim Service provider in their region. It was further noted that victims in those communities are more likely to be Indigenous (over 74% of population outside Inuvik and Yellowknife are Indigenous) for whom relationships and trust are critical factors contributing to access. The community visits and interviews with various stakeholders demonstrated that Victim Service providers who are visible in their communities (i.e. people know of them and trust them) and able to build strong relationships are perceived to be very effective and responsive to victims' needs. Some Victim Service providers highlighted the difficulties in providing emotional support over the phone during a time of crisis.

Another aspect of the services commonly highlighted by stakeholders, particularly RCMP officers, was the importance of timeliness, particularly with respect to emotional support. It was suggested that victims need emotional support immediately after a crime has occurred. This is when they are most anxious and in a state of shock. Timely access is particularly important in cases of intimate partner violence. As some respondents noted, victims of IPV can quickly change their minds about accessing services or having their partner removed from the house after a cool-down period. Some studies argue that given the importance of that first contact and the fact that a victim's first point of contact with the criminal justice system is with law enforcement, victims should be offered support at the earliest opportunity rather than having to seek out services.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, some community stakeholders (RCMP, shelter providers, and other community organizations) commented on the challenges of getting in touch with the Victim Service provider either by phone or email. As one stakeholder noted, "it's always a guessing game but very often there is nobody there [in the office]." While most acknowledged that this is likely due to Victim Service providers being overwhelmed or serving other clients, not having quick and timely access to speak to someone can result in clients giving up on trying to access the service. For example, some stakeholders talked about the frustration felt by clients when they call the Victim Services office and cannot reach anyone. A few stakeholders remarked that they sometimes simply deal with clients themselves rather than making referrals if the provider is continuously difficult to reach.

## 3.2 Achievement of Outcomes

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<sup>26</sup> Scrim, K. & Spijkerman, Clarinda (2013). "Is a Picture Worth a Thousand Words? The Opportunities and Challenges of Using GIS-Based Mapping with a Victim's Lens" *Victims of Crime Research Digest*, Volume 6, 20-29. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd6-rr6/rd6-rr6.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime (2013) *Meeting the need of Victims of Crime in Canada*. Ottawa: Government of Canada. <https://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/vv/rec1112-rec1112.html>.

### 3.2.1 Increased Access to Justice and Participation in the Justice System

#### **Victim Services are largely perceived as effective in increasing understanding of and access to justice for victims who are interested in participating in the court process.**

The meaning of access to justice by victims has changed over time. Traditionally, access to justice was defined by access to lawyers and the court process. Today, access to justice largely encompasses access to information and knowledge, access to resources, and access to services that can assist in navigating the system. It could also include access to restorative justice processes.<sup>28</sup> Legislative changes in Canada have brought forward the focus on access to justice for victims. Under the Canadian Victims' Bill of Rights, enacted in 2015,<sup>29</sup> victims have a right to ask for certain information about the justice system, including information about the criminal justice system and the role of victims, about available services and programs, and about their right to file complaints for infringements of their rights under the CVBR.

Most key informants reported that Victim Service providers help victims understand their rights and the court system and thus increase the likelihood of victims' participation in the justice system. For example, it was reported that Victim Service providers:

- **Increase victims' understanding of their rights and responsibilities.** For example, they simplify the legal language and explain other aspects of the legal system, including definitions of terms, restitution funds, Victim Notification programs, the right to testimonial aids, and any other rights under the Victim Bill of Rights.

- **Increase victims' likelihood of participating in the system by preparing them for court and accompanying them.** Administrative data suggest that Victim Service providers have helped prepare and accompany victims in court over 500 times over four years. They help victims understand the process and, more importantly, provide emotional support in the time leading up to court and during the court process. In some communities, Victim Service providers attend the court proceedings even if victims are not there so that they can inform them about the decisions made (e.g. if the case has been adjourned, new conditions were put in place, etc.). In larger centres, this is difficult to do because of the number of cases, so Victim Service providers are more likely to accompany victims to court when requested by the victim or to phone court officials to find out what happened. Interviews highlighted the importance of Victim Service providers' availability to accompany victims in court because of the stressful nature of the experience, the anxiety of facing the accused, and the confusion victims often experience about the court proceedings. For example, one Victim Service provider spoke about how stressful it is for victims to spend hours at the courthouse, waiting to give testimony and being frightened

*"She educated me all about the court process, step by step. She took care of everything. She just told me what to expect and what would happen next but didn't bombard me with information... I was totally out of myself at the time." – Client Interview*

<sup>28</sup> McDonald, S. (2019) "Access to Justice for Victims of Crime", Victims of Crime Research Digest, Issue 12: 19-26 <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd12-rr12/rd12-rr12.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Government of Canada (2017). Victims' Rights in Canada. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/rights-droits/victim.html>.

about running into the accused. In that case, the Victim Service provider was able to find a more private space where victim could wait and pray before appearing in the court.

- **Contribute to strengthening victims' voices.** According to administrative data, Victim Service providers have facilitated the completion of nearly 400 Victim Impact Statements (VIS) over four years. Some interviewees suggested that victims often do not want to relive the traumatic experience or are too ashamed of presenting this information personally, so having someone to help them write the impact statement is important to ensure their voices are heard in court.

Stakeholders involved in the court processes (e.g. RCMP, Court providers, the Crown) reported that Victim Service providers play an important role in offering comfort and emotional support to victims during a process that can be very intimidating. Some suggested that this support is impacting victims' likelihood of testifying because without these supports, victims may be more likely to give up on the process due to the confusing nature of the justice system and the emotional toll of participating in proceedings.

*"I liked the service a lot because it meant I wasn't alone going through that. It's a tough experience to deal with. The first time I testified in court I was 13 years old and there was no one like that back then to help you. Then later in life when I had issues with my partner, I was dealing with RCMP but wouldn't put down charges because I didn't want to have to go through the court process. Later down the road I did engage with court process and I had that support ... the victim worker helped me and explained the support and options available to me ... it made me feel good and not alone." –*

### **Some overlap of the Victim Service provider's role with that of the Crown Witness Coordinator was noted.**

In addition to Victim Service providers, there are other resources established to help facilitate or increase victims' understanding of and access to justice. These different resources include:

- The Victim Service Program CVBR coordinator. This position was established in April 2017. The CVBR coordinator is tasked with enhancing the knowledge of, and response to, the provisions under the CVBR among service providers and NWT residents. The coordinator is based in Yellowknife and performs some duties via email and phone. Some community travel is also included. The focus of this role is to increase public understanding of the justice system through the development of awareness material and the development and delivery of training materials for service providers (e.g. the coordinator conducts CVBR education sessions for service providers and community stakeholders as well as research into relevant areas such as third-party reporting for sexual assault).
- Crown Witness Coordinators (CWC). The role is established within the Public Prosecution Service of Canada and works directly with the Crown Prosecutors serving the NWT, Nunavut, and Yukon. In NWT, there are currently 6 Crown Witness Coordinators who are all based in Yellowknife but regularly travel to communities with the courts. They attempt to get in contact with victims immediately after receiving RCMP files. Their responsibilities include ensuring that victims and witnesses have an understanding of the

justice system, their rights, and responsibilities; providing court preparation, orientation and accompaniment; providing information about court progression and court decisions after the trial; and making referrals to community services.<sup>30</sup>

- Community Justice Committee Providers. Although justice committee work largely focuses on offenders, they also make efforts to increase victims' participation in the restorative process through restorative justice initiatives such as diversion programs. The Community Justice Committee may also play a role in organizing crime prevention activities and community programming related to justice.

Although each role is unique and responds to victims' needs differently, some stakeholders identified duplication in efforts between the Victim Service provider and Crown Witness Coordinators. For example, both are carrying out roles related to informing victims of their rights (e.g. their right to testimonial aids), helping them prepare for court, providing support during the court process, explaining what has occurred in court, and providing updates on the process. The overlap in services has the potential to create confusion among clients who may be unsure as to whom to contact and can also create frustrations among service providers. Despite some overlap, the stakeholders noted important differences in the two roles. For example, CWCs have direct access to court files and are better positioned to provide accurate and up-to-date information on a client's court case, request a testimonial aid and help victims or witnesses understand the process. However, CWC support is limited only to the duration of the court process, and unlike Victim Service providers they are not well positioned to provide emotional support to clients because they have the obligation to disclose any relevant information to authorities.

Closer collaboration and better information sharing can help address some of the duplication and ensure that the right resources are used to appropriately respond to client's needs. For example, it was suggested that both CWCs and Victim Service providers should work more closely and collaboratively to ensure that victims have access to accurate information about their cases.

**Key informants suggested that continuing limited participation of victims in the justice system is a result of longstanding underlying factors rather than a lack of information or available support.**

Although not a determining factor, victim collaboration with justice officials, including providing detailed information to RCMP officers, plays an important part in the Crown's decision on whether a case will be prosecuted. The Crown counsel has a responsibility to weigh the attitude of the victim and the impact of the alleged offense on the victim and their family, among other factors, when deciding to prosecute or not.<sup>31</sup>

RCMP and Justice representatives estimated that the number of incidents recommended for charge remain low, although the number of violent incidents has somewhat increased. Some believe that victims are not necessarily more likely to cooperate with the police investigation because of increased support but noted that they do not have hard data to support that

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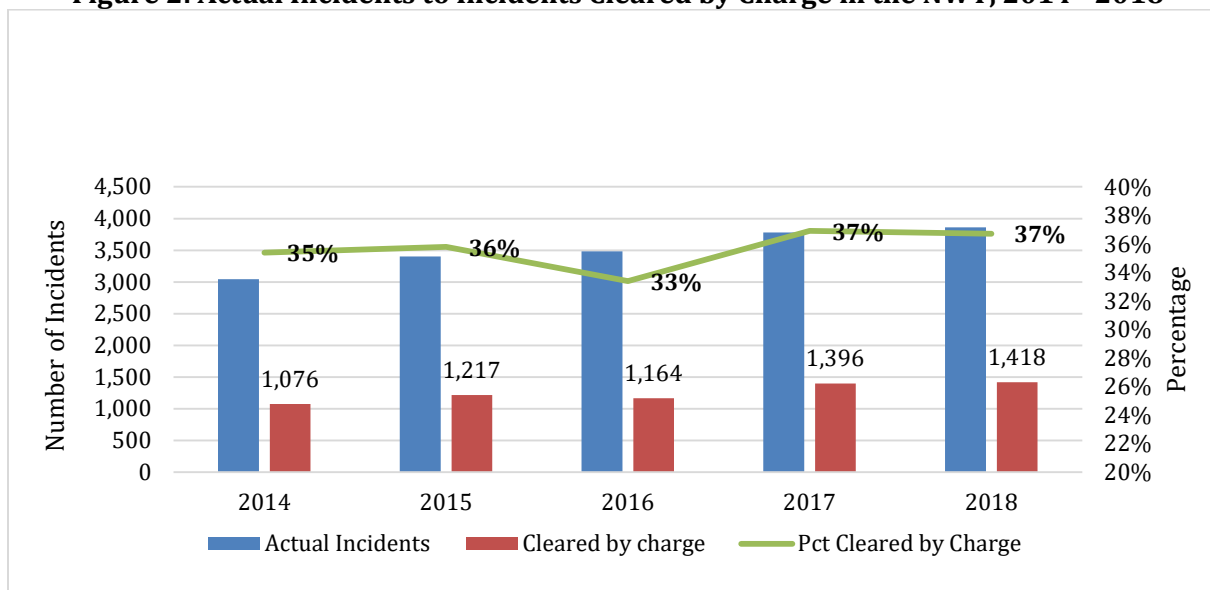
<sup>30</sup> Government of Canada, Crown Witness Coordinator Program Photo Essay, <https://victimsweek.gc.ca/stories-experience/essay-essai/north-nord.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Public Prosecution Service of Canada, "2.3 Decision to Prosecute," in *Public Prosecution Service of Canada Deskbook*, May 14, 2019, <https://www.ppsc-sppc.gc.ca/eng/pub/fpsd-sfpg/fps-sfp/tpd/p2/ch03.html/>.

perception. Most RCMP officers reported that they have not seen significant change in victims' readiness to follow through with the process, so in some cases there is not enough evidence to prosecute.

Statistics Canada data illustrate that there has been some increase in the NWT with respect to the number of incidents "cleared by charge" (defined as the situation in which "at least one accused must have been identified and either a charge has been laid, or recommended to be laid, against this individual in connection with the incident"). However, the portion of incidents cleared as a percent of violent Criminal Code incidents in the NWT since 2014 has remained relatively stable.

**Figure 2: Actual Incidents to Incidents Cleared by Charge in the NWT, 2014 - 2018**



Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510017701>

Other data shows a substantial decline in the cases completed as a percentage of those initiated since 2008/09 (i.e. 97% of initiated cases were completed in 2008/09 compared to just 70% in 2017/18), while the number of cases stayed, withdrawn, dismissed, or otherwise discontinued has increased.<sup>32</sup>

There are many reasons victims may not want to participate in the judicial process, including fear of the offender, uncertainty, mistrust in the system, financial loss, shame, stigma, and lack of transportation and childcare.<sup>33</sup> Victim Service providers also spoke of victims' reluctance to

<sup>32</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0027-01: Adult criminal courts, number of cases and charges by type of decision. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510002701>.

<sup>33</sup> Moffitt, P. & Fikowski, H. (2018) Addressing Intimate Partner Violence in the Northwest Territories, Canada: Findings and Implications from a Study on Northern Community Response (2011-2017).” In H. Exner-Pirot, B. Norbye, & L. Butler (Eds.), *Northern and Indigenous Health and Healthcare*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: University of Saskatchewan. <https://openpress.usask.ca/northernhealthcare/chapter/chapter-16-addressing-intimate-partner-violence-in-the-northwest-territories-canada-findings-and-implications-from-a-study-on-northern-community-response-2011-2017/>.

participate in the justice system. For example, some Victim Service providers noted that the most common questions victims have is how they can drop the charges or remove the conditions, often because they need their partners at home to provide for the family. A few RCMP officers noted that victims sometimes refuse to admit that they were physically abused; often they just want the police to take the abuser away until they are sober.

Another factor that contributes to victims' reluctance to participate in the court process is the length of time it takes to resolve cases before a court. Generally, cases can take approximately one year to resolve, and longer still for indictable offences. Some respondents said that in small communities it is very difficult for the victim and the accused to avoid each other and the pressure from community members or relatives to reconcile is strong.

### **Consultations with Justice Committee representatives suggest that victims' participation in Restorative Justice is limited.**

Restorative justice (RJ) emerged as an approach to justice rooted in many traditional Indigenous practices which aim to heal and repair the harm caused, to the extent possible, by seeking direct accountability for criminal behavior.<sup>34</sup> Restorative justice is "an approach to justice that focuses on addressing the harm caused by crime while holding the offender responsible for his or her actions, by providing an opportunity for the parties directly affected by crime – victim(s), offender and community – to identify and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime."<sup>35</sup>

Restorative justice often involves diversions for minor criminal matters (e.g. theft, mischief, alcohol and drug offences, and minor assault). The victim is encouraged to participate but their participation is voluntary. Some perceive victims' participation in the restorative justice process as crucial to achieving its objective of reparation of harm.<sup>36</sup>

The level of victims' participation in restorative justice is linked to various factors. In the 2018 Criminal Justice Professionals Survey, respondents (VSP providers and police) were asked about barriers that victims face in accessing restorative justice<sup>37</sup>. The barriers they cited included:

- An absence of RJ programs. Not all communities have RJ programs. Additionally, the capacity of programs to deal directly with victims can be limited.
- Limited knowledge of RJ among the public and criminal justice system professionals.
- Lack of referrals. When community partners do not have sufficient awareness of the program, the level of referrals is affected.

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<sup>34</sup> Bargen, C., Lyons, A., & Hartman, M. (2019). *Crime Victims' Experiences of Restorative Justice: A Listening Project*. Ottawa: Department of Justice Canada

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/cverj-vvpcj/cverj-vvpcj.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Robert Cormier, as quoted in Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Restorative Justice, "Key Messages on Restorative Justice," Correctional Service Canada, December 22, 2009, <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/restorative-justice/003005-4005-eng.shtml>.

<sup>36</sup> Principles and Guidelines for Restorative Justice Practice in Criminal Matters (2018). <https://scics.ca/en/product-produit/principles-and-guidelines-for-restorative-justice-practice-in-criminal-matters-2018/>.

<sup>37</sup> Bourgon, N. (2019) "2018 Criminal Justice Professionals Survey: A Spotlight on Restorative Justice" Victims of Crime Research Digest, Issue 12: 13-18. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd12-rr12/rd12-rr12.pdf>.

- Lack of interest from victims. Victims are sometimes uninterested in taking part in the process either because they do not believe it will meet their needs or because of the emotional or psychological effect it would have.
- Appropriateness of the crime for RJ. For example, some respondents saw sexual assault cases as inappropriate for RJ given the risk of secondary victimization.

Other studies reported that victims are less likely to participate if the timing or location is inconvenient, if they are too angry with the offender, or if they do not trust the sincerity of the offender to take the process seriously.<sup>38</sup>

Interviews with justice coordinators and justice committees suggest that victims' participation in RJ varies significantly across communities. In two communities, justice coordinators reported that victims take part in the process between 50-75% of the time. In one of these communities, the Victim Service provider sits on the justice committee and guides the initial interview with victims in order to provide support and avoid further trauma. In another community, the justice coordinator attributed the high participation rate from victims to the positive reputation the program held among the wider community. However, some communities (e.g. Fort Providence, Fort Good Hope, and Behchokq) have vacancies in justice committee positions, which may reduce the committees' local effectiveness and influence and in turn result in low victim participation. Other reasons noted were that victims often do not want to revisit a painful incident or that the types of incidents a community often deals with are not appropriate for RJ, a program which deals primarily with less serious offences (e.g. theft, minor assault).

### 3.2.2 Linking Victims to Other Services

**The Program is effective in helping its clients understand the type of services and supports that are available to them and assisting them in accessing those services. The most common referrals are to counselling services, the RCMP and legal services, and shelters.**

As discussed earlier, persons accessing Victim Services may have a wide range of needs and face unique challenges related to personal trauma and family circumstances. The Victim Service providers explained that they would first spend some time talking with their clients to better understand their situations, the urgency of the situations they may be in, and what their immediate needs may be. They would then explain different options or solutions for victims to consider.

Administrative data and interviews with Victim Service providers suggest that victims were most frequently referred to:

- **Counselling services and traditional wellness programs.** According to administrative data, victims are referred to counselling services between 21-35% of the time, and up to 10% of the time to traditional services. Counselling services are provided through the Department of Health and Social Services. Trained counsellors live in 20 communities and

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<sup>38</sup> Wemmers, J. & Canuto, M. (2002) *Victims' experiences with, expectations and perceptions of Restorative Justice*. Ottawa: Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice, Canada.  
[https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr01\\_9/rr01\\_9.pdf](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr01_9/rr01_9.pdf).



are available for fly-in or phone support in the other communities.<sup>39</sup> The Health and Social Services Boards also fund different mentoring programs such as the Women and Children's Healing and Recovery Program (Yellowknife); Yellowknife Women's Centre, In Home Support Program (Yellowknife); and Inuvik Family Counselling Centre (Inuvik). Most communities visited as part of this evaluation have multiple programs that are Indigenous based and culturally relevant to their communities, such as healing circles or group support programs for families, women, men and youth. For example, the Fort Smith Métis Council created a community wellness plan that incorporates an On the Land program, drum-making, and provision of traditional foods to members (e.g. caribou, migratory birds).<sup>40</sup> In addition, in the Inuvialuit region, there are On the Land Healing programs and wellness workshops. Liidlii Kue First Nation in Fort Simpson also provides an On the Land program, as well as a weekly talking circle for men. The Tłı̨chǫ government organized a 14-day On the Land program that involved mental health sessions, learning to cook over a fire, and traditional practices such as healing and fishing.

- **Legal Services.** The most common referrals, as per administrative data, are to the RCMP, legal services, and the Crown (ranging from 15% to 30% of client referrals over four years). Victim Service providers reported that they often follow up on behalf of victims, with the responding RCMP officer to find out more about the case (e.g. using the case file number) and report that has been filed. Victims are often referred to the Crown office and a CWC to get specific information about the court date or the proceedings. The NWT Legal Services Board also provides information in the form of free legal aid services across the territory. Advocacy is also provided by the Friendship Centres throughout the territory. There are six Friendship Centres available in the NWT. Friendship Centres help Indigenous people living off-reserve with accessing services and organize community programming. Friendship Centres are located in Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Behchokǫ, and Fort Simpson.
- **Shelters and Family Violence Counselling and Advocacy.** The administrative data suggest that about 10% of clients are referred to shelters. Victim Service providers noted that women are most often referred to shelters. Some suggested that there has been a shortage of shelters for men. In NWT, there are five family violence shelters for women and their children which are located in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, and Tuktoyaktuk. All have between four to 12 beds and offer emotional support, advocacy, referral services, and some in-house training (e.g. life skills, dynamics of family violence).

Apart from providing information (i.e. telling victims about services that are available and helpful) and providing referrals (i.e. helping them fill out forms), Victim Service providers often accompany victims to hospitals, RCMP offices, and social provider offices. One Victims Service provider noted that *"the only way to assure they will go there is to take them by the hand."* In one of the smaller communities, a respondent from a partner organization spoke about how the Victim Service provider accompanies clients to the income support office and helps them fill out forms

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<sup>39</sup> Health and Social Services, NWT Community Counselling Program <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/nwt-community-counselling-program-ccp> (accessed April 15th, 2020).

<sup>40</sup> Fort Smith Metis Council (2018). 2018 Community Wellness Plan. <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/fort-smith-community-wellness-plan.pdf>.

and ensure everything is done properly so that there are no delays. In a larger community, a member of the RCMP noted that the Victim Service providers often accompany victims to the health centre when there has been a sexual assault incident.

**Interagency meetings are perceived as a good avenue to increase collaboration and information sharing. However, they are not consistently implemented or effective in all communities.**

Interagency meetings provide various service providers with an opportunity to learn about each other's services, new programs that are being offered, public awareness events, and issues and challenges communities are facing. They also allow agencies to collaborate on ideas for community programming and educational events. For example, in Inuvik, interagency meetings are held regularly every month and many of the community stakeholders participate, including the RCMP, the justice committee coordinator, shelter and housing representatives, counsellors, and wellness providers. One of the initiatives resulting from this collaboration was a community healing circle which was open to public and at one time had up to 50 participants.

Interagency meetings were inconsistent across communities. Although all communities mentioned collaborating with other agencies in their narrative reports, only two communities explicitly mentioned participating in interagency meetings in the last year. Of those two communities, one noted that the interagency meeting occurs every few months. In the other community, interagency meetings took place every month, as did the Mental Health and Addictions working group meetings in which the Victim Service providers took part. Interview respondents highlighted that interagency meetings are held somewhat irregularly. For example, respondents from two communities noted that interagency meetings had not gone ahead in the last few months.

Although most community stakeholders expressed strong support for the interagency meetings, some suggested that there is a lack of leadership, structure and commitment to the established goals. One community representative expressed her frustration with the lack of consistency and strong collaboration initiatives stating that, *"Well we do meet, it's kind of ad hoc and people don't always show-up – did not see VSP representatives there last time. Also, I am not really sure how effective these meetings are, we keep talking about the same things."*

There has been an attempt in the past to formalize such collaborations, For example, the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence Protocol was developed in 2008 by eight Yellowknife agencies (the RCMP; Victim Services; Public Prosecutions Canada; the Stanton Territorial Health Authority; the YWCA; Health and Social Services; the Centre for Northern Families; and GNWT Income Security programs).<sup>41</sup> This protocol was developed in an effort to establish a seamless and coherent response to adult victims of family violence across multiple stakeholder organizations. The protocol describes how agencies will respond to the needs of victims of family violence in a collaborative way. Some of the commitments made by agencies under the protocol included promoting family violence awareness within agencies, responding to victims of family violence in a culturally relevant way, offering ongoing training about family violence, and maintaining open

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<sup>41</sup> Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol, 2008.

<http://www.nwtseiorsociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/YK-Interagency-FVAbuse-Protocol-FINAL-revised-May-08-.pdf>.



communication with those involved with the protocol. It is not clear how effective this protocol has been or to what extent it continues to be used.

**In smaller communities there is a general lack of other social services and supports, while in larger centers systemic issues such as disintegration of services, turnover, and the locations of services create barriers to access and limit effectiveness.**

The availability of services and supports for victims of crime differs significantly across communities. Some communities have access to a broad range of services, while others rely on very few local agencies to deliver services. For example, Yellowknife, Inuvik, Fort Smith, and Hay River, four of the larger regional centres, have the widest range of services and supports for both the public and victims of crime. Each of these four communities have post-secondary college campuses or Community Learning Centres, family violence shelters, community-based counselling, food banks, treatment programs, resident probation officers, corrections facilities (excluding Inuvik), and multiple social service agencies.

In smaller communities, there are fewer services and supports which are often provided via telephone and are irregular. For example, in some communities counselling is provided by phone or occasionally in person by visiting counsellors and specialized health providers. In communities where counsellors are available, interview respondents noted their high workload and long waiting lists to get access. Counselling services were described as “stretched to the max.” One stakeholder stated that *“there are counsellors in the area but there are waiting lists for them. Like [victim service providers], they’ve got to handle the whole region, so they’re overworked.”*

In terms of linking victims to other services, access to shelters represented a major need among clients of Victim Services. However, one of the main gaps in services identified by most respondents is the lack of family violence shelters for women with children. As illustrated in the table below, five shelters with a total 34 beds cover the entire NWT and offer a maximum stay of 42 days. As such, those in smaller communities must travel long distances to access a family violence shelter. The distance required to travel to shelters can be challenging. A recent analysis of 2016 Census data found that one in three people in NWT live more than 100km from a domestic violence shelter.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 17: Family Violence Shelters, Type and Capacity**

Community	Shelter	Beds	Max. length of stay	Type of shelter
Yellowknife	YWCA Alison McAteer House	12	42 days	Women and children
Fort Smith	Sutherland House	8	42 days	Women and children
Hay River	Family Support Centre	8	42 days	Women and children
Inuvik	Inuvik Transition House	12	No max*	Women and children
Tuktoyaktuk	Aimayunga Women and Emergency Foster Care Shelter	4	6 days	Women and children

\*No official maximum – dependent on individual cases.

<sup>42</sup> Kyle, K. & Carman, T. (2020, March, 5<sup>th</sup>) The long journey to safety: Northern women travel farthest to access domestic violence shelters. CBC. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/northern-women-travel-farthest-shelter-1.5485859>.

Some community stakeholders reported that in many communities there are no housing options for men other than homeless shelters. One Victim Service provider talked about an incident where a male client with children needed to leave an abusive situation, but they were not able to find suitable housing for him. A few stakeholders highlighted a need for youth-specific shelters, specifically for persons 15 to 25 years of age, who also need a lot of additional support (e.g. mental health and addiction support).

One of the challenges in understanding the extent to which victims access various services is that community stakeholders do not have much insight about what happens after the referrals are made. While all community stakeholders interviewed reported that referrals to and from the Victim Services office are common, they were unable to comment on whether victims actually follow up on those referrals. A few stakeholders asserted that victims do not follow through on accessing other services because they are *“back here with the same questions.”* To address this issue, one stakeholder now asks victims for permission to share their phone number with the Victim Service provider so that she can ensure someone will follow up.

In larger regional centers, many stakeholders talked about the broader challenges associated with siloed government supports and services. Some stakeholders claim that in communities where numerous services are available, systemic issues such as the location of services; the lack of awareness and clarity about specific programs, various offerings and service providers' roles; limited collaboration; and high turnover create significant barriers to access and effectiveness. Some of these challenges related to effective collaboration are illustrated below:

- Disintegrated Services:* Victims may be referred to various resources to have their questions answered or needs addressed. For example, one Courtworker noted that victims would approach her to ask questions about the court process because she is more visible and because people know her. She then refers them to Victim Services who, depending on type of inquiry client has, may have to refer them to CWC. One client interviewed expressed a similar sentiment: *“I ran around this town from one place to another, went to every single office to help her [daughter] get out of that abusive relationship. I went to Victim Services, then police, social service.... I drove her to counselling, then we took her to the land... Nothing worked.”*
- Location:* Some community stakeholders noted that where services are physically located can have an impact on whether clients access them (e.g. some Victim Service offices do not have disability access; some are located in different parts of town far from court). In one community, stakeholders described the physical remoteness of the Victim Services office, which was located at the separate end of town and harder to get to from other services such as the police, the court and health services, as problematic.
- High Turnover:* A few stakeholders noted the challenges in building connections and linkages with Victim Services because of high turnover. High turnover in other agencies impacts ability to build trusting and collaborative relationships; it also interrupts the continuity of care for victims. Many respondents (sponsoring organization representatives and community stakeholders) commented on the frustration they felt about the RCMP rotation model. It was felt that RCMP officers become familiar with the community, build relationships with the community, and then leave for a new

*“There is always someone new there [at the Victim Services office] and if I can't get them on the phone when I need them, forget it - that client is not waiting.” - Community stakeholder interview*

assignment. Similarly, respondents commented on the high level of turnover with counsellors and staff at Health and Social Services. Turnover in roles related to community justice also causes disruption for Victim Services.

- *Availability:* The availability and responsiveness of the Victim Service providers impacts the effectiveness of relationships and collaboration among various community services. In the words of one community representative, “I tried calling them [Victim Services] to ask questions for my clients, but nobody ever answers the phone over there.”
- *Limited Information Sharing:* Many stakeholders had limited knowledge about specific services provided by Victim Services. When asked about how well they understand supports and services provided by Victim Service providers, some stakeholders did not know much about how the Program specifically helps their clients, apart from providing information about the court. This was particularly true in larger centers and communities where interagency meetings were not held regularly or attended by Victim Service providers. This can impact the referrals made to the Program. Other concerns were noted in a few communities such as personalities, community politics and how leadership and culture within the community organizations can set the tone for collaboration.

### 3.2.3 Contributing to Victims’ Safety

**Victim service providers contribute to increasing victims’ safety by helping them develop safety plans and secure protection orders as well as helping them in emergency situations. Only one community has after-hours access to support in case of emergency.**

In most communities, Victim Service providers assess the risk of individuals they work with in an informal way (e.g. asking questions about clients’ safety, previous incidents, whether there are children or elders in the home, etc.). In some cases, more formal risk assessments were done. Three communities reported 127 Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessments (ODARA) completed over four years.<sup>43</sup>

The interviews highlighted a number of actions taken by the Victim Service providers that support victims in an emergency situation. These include:

- Helping victims create safety plans. Victim Service providers talked about encouraging victims of family violence to think about the potential consequences if they do not have a safety plan. They talk to clients about having access to an emergency bag of supplies prepared in advance, ensuring the client has access to a phone, deciding on a safe location ahead of time, and involving the RCMP. In one community, the Victim Service provider allowed a victim of domestic abuse from another community to stay in her home. This was offered as a short-term

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<sup>43</sup> The ODARA is the result of collaboration between the Ontario Provincial Police Behavioural Sciences and Analysis Section and the Research Department at Waypoint. It was created from research on nearly 600 cases from OPP and municipal police records. The ODARA is easy to score, either from documents alone, or from documents plus an interview with a female client who is the victim of the offender’s most recent domestic assault. It is the first empirically developed and validated domestic violence risk assessment tool to assess the risk of future domestic assault as well as the frequency and severity of future assaults.

solution to allow the client to leave the community immediately, while also providing them with a safe place to stay while they waited to fly out to the nearest shelter.

- Assisting with securing emergency protection orders. The VSP is also playing a role in helping victims of crime to secure protection orders. In one community, the Victim Service provider helped to set up a new process for securing peace bonds. While the previous system involved going back and forth between the courthouse, the RCMP and the victim service office, the forms for securing peace bonds are now with the victim services. They are filled out by the Victim Service provider and then brought to the RCMP detachment.
- Transportation. Some Victim Service providers provided transportation to victims who were in emergency situations. For example, in one case Victim Service providers took a taxi and picked up a victim in the middle of the night and took her to a safe house.

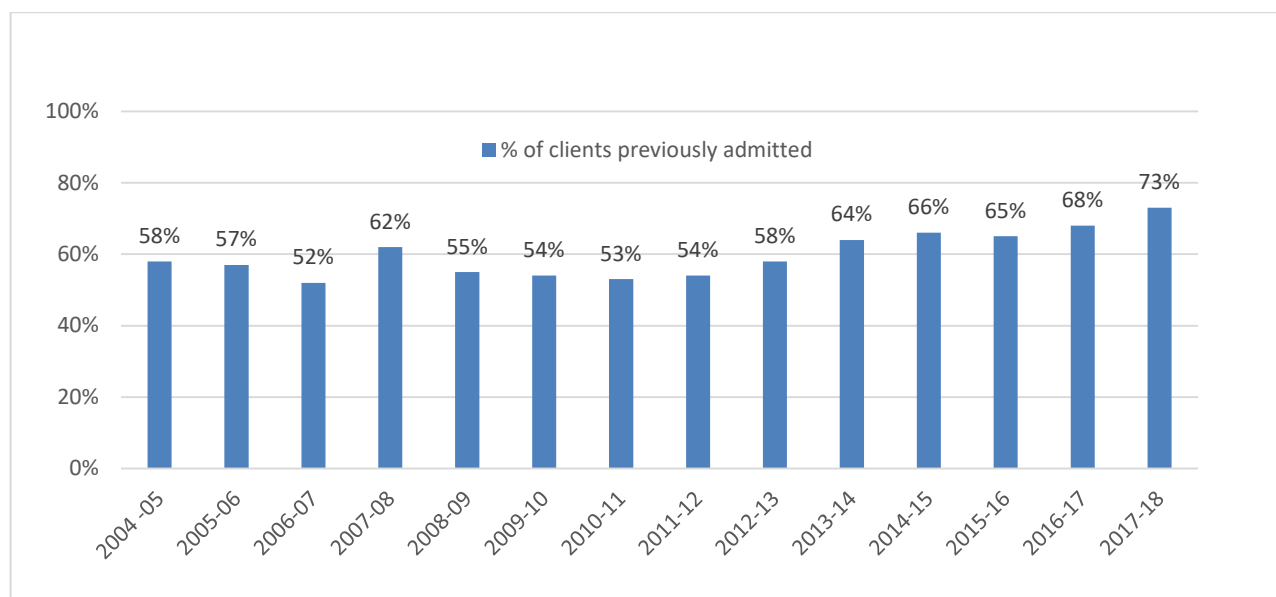
Although most communities provided data on on-call services, usually provided by Victim Service providers for no additional pay, only one community reported providing after-hours service using volunteers. These services may include joining the RCMP to calls where a death has occurred, helping victims leave the crime scene (e.g. to move into a shelter or a safe house), providing them with an emergency bag containing necessities, and accompanying victims to a health center in cases of sexual abuse.

The most common challenges related to assisting victims in emergency situations is the lack of shelters or safe houses for victims, especially for women who are revictimized. As noted earlier, many Victim Service providers and community organizations raised concerns about safety for women in communities where there is no access to shelters. They reiterated that women who cannot or do not want to leave their communities are at risk. Data from the HSS on family violence shelter usage re-admission rates confirms that most women accessing shelters had previously accessed them. Shelter usage, according to HSS data, has remained relatively consistent over the last nine years, averaging around 24 admitted women and 19 children per month. However, as illustrated in the chart below, the proportion of re-admissions to shelters in 2017-18 has been highest (78%) since 2014-15.<sup>44</sup>

**Figure 3: Family Violence Shelter Re-Admission Rates (2004/05 to 2017/18)**

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<sup>44</sup> Health and Social Services (2018) Annual Report 2017-18, NWT Health and Social Services System. <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/resources/hss-annual-report-2017-18.pdf>.



Source: HSS (2018) Annual Report

**The Victims of Crime Emergency Fund is one of the most important tools that Victim Service providers use to assist victims in emergency situations and contribute to their safety. Issues were raised with regards to access to funds for victims in outreach communities.**

Most representatives interviewed were familiar with the VCEF and perceive it as one of the most important tools for helping victims in emergency situations. Contributions towards cell phones to assist with emergency situations, calling minutes and transportation were specifically highlighted in helping victims find safety or have access to safety tools when they need them. Both Victim Service providers and the RCMP noted that the funds have been used to help people leave a community, acquire phones, and change locks or fix doors. It was also suggested by Victim Service providers that in most cases the approval and distribution of VCEF monies is timely and efficient.

Of the almost \$240,000 expended over four years, over a quarter was approved for contracts and ID replacements. The fund has been used to fly victims out from the communities where necessary, although only 8% of the fund was for that purpose.

**Table 18: Items Funded by the VCEF (2014/15 to 2018/19)**

Items Funded (2014/15 - 2018/19)	Amount	\$
Contractor/Replacement ID	\$60,675	26%
Emergency Food/Clothing	\$43,456	19%
Emergency Phone and Minutes	\$39,883	17%
Food/clothing	\$31,090	13%
Counselling	\$21,530	9%
Air Transport	\$19,365	8%
Taxi/Ground	\$4,261	2%
Reimbursement	\$6,271	3%
Accommodation	\$5,194	2%
Per Diems	\$1,855	1%
Emergency Med/Pres	\$3,377	1%

Items Funded (2014/15 - 2018/19)	Amount	\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$237,339</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: VCEF Administrative Data (2014/15 to 2018/19)

About 12% of clients served over four years received VCEF support as reported in Program administrative data.<sup>45</sup> The following table summarizes the number of requests, clients funded and cost per client and request by year:

- The number of requests for funds in the last five years has doubled from 45 requests in 2014/15 to 108 requests as of 2018/19. Similarly, the number of unique clients in 2018/19 had doubled since 2014/15. In the last five years, 39 requests were denied while 43 clients had more than one request.
- The average amount per request ranged between about \$500 to \$800, while the average amount per person from about \$650 to nearly \$900.
- In 2018/19, there were 108 requests for assistance approved (7 were denied). According to some Victim Service providers, funding can be denied if a person is a victim of circumstance rather than of a crime. One Victim Service provider noted that funding was recently denied to a person who was a victim of online scamming.
- In 2018/19, a total of 87 clients received an average of \$642 (compared to \$745 in 2014/15 and \$888 in 2015/16). Excluded from the following table are additional funds for food, clothing and self-care items provided to 217 individuals who were victims of apartment fires.<sup>46</sup>

**Table 19: Number of Clients Requesting VCEF (2014/15 to 2018/19)**

Clients Funded	Fiscal Year					Total
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19*	
Number of Requests for Funds	45	86	77	76	108	392
Number of Clients	41	78	65	65	87	336
Number Denied (Requested but Not approved)	7	7	12	6	7	39
Number of Clients with More than 1 request	3	6	8	11	15	43
Average Amount per Request	\$678	\$805	\$563	\$572	\$517	\$619
Average Amount per Person	\$745	\$888	\$667	\$669	\$642	\$722

Source: VCEF Administrative Data (2014/15 to 2018/19) \*excludes 217 individuals who were victim of three apartment fires – Yellowknife and Hay River and Katlodeeche

There are some discrepancies in available data as well as perceptions regarding the demand and access to the VCEF. For example, administrative data suggest that over four years, 566 VCEF forms were submitted, compared to only 347 requests registered with the government data. The VCEF data shows that not all communities access the funding. Of 17 communities receiving the funding,

<sup>45</sup> Note that clients served from 2015/16 to 2018/19 was 2,560 according to program administrative data; clients receiving VCEF in the same time period numbered 295.

<sup>46</sup> As per the Annual Report (2018/19)



three accounted for two thirds of total funds expended. Nearly half of the funding was approved for victims in Yellowknife (46%), followed by Inuvik (12%) and Fort Good Hope (10%).

More than a few key informants raised concerns about access to the funds and potential abuse of the fund by some individuals. They suggested that access to VCEF is heavily determined by level of awareness of the VCEF and access to the VSP. For example, victims in outlying communities are less likely to know about the availability of funds and request help. In communities where providing outreach was somewhat more successful, Victim Service providers indicated that they have assisted clients in outlying communities with applying for VCEF.

Conversely, almost half of the Victim Service providers suggested that some clients are regular users of the fund and at times have been asking for funding for reasons that do not align with funding eligibility requirements (e.g. mostly related to requesting new phones and phone minutes). Our analysis of VCEF administrative data shows that since 2011, there were 31 individuals that received funds 3 times or more (of those, 4 received funds more than 5 times; the average amount received by these individuals ranged from about \$850 to \$4,700).

### 3.2.4 Increased Public Knowledge and Awareness of Impact of Victimization

**Various activities and events were held in all communities where Victim Services are located, which have some impact on increasing public knowledge of the services and impact of crime on victims.**

The GNWT has developed numerous materials and publications to help residents find information about the Program and help educate them about staying safe. These publications have been made available online. Some examples include:

- *Staying Safe* – A publication focused on family violence and safety planning.
- *Court Orders for Safety* – Provides information on Court Orders for Safety.
- *NWT Victim Services* – Full-size publication on NWT Victim Services for the general public.
- *FACT SHEET NWT Victims of Crime Emergency Fund (VCEF)* – A short fact sheet providing basic facts about the fund.
- *Sexual Assault* – A book developed for NWT youth, originally released in 1992 and updated in 2009.
- *Being a Witness* – A brochure on what being a witness entails; provides some information on what happens in court, testifying, getting a subpoena, etc.
- *Breaking and Entering* – This document offers information on what to do after an incident, how to interact with the justice system, and how to make your home safe.
- *Peace Bonds* – A short brochure on what a peace bond is and how to secure one.
- *Serious Crime* – A publication on the emotional impact of serious crime, what one can do in the event of victimization, and dealing with the criminal justice system.
- *Youth Crime*. A brochure for victims of youth crime. It explains victims' rights, as well as the processes and principles of the youth justice process.

Victim Service providers often collaborate with other agencies in the delivery of community-wide events. These events focus on public education around victimization and building awareness of the Victim Services Program. The most common events and activities that are implemented across all eight communities are:



- Family Violence Awareness Week;
- Sisters in Spirit Walk;
- National Victims and Survivors of Crime Week;
- Health Fair Events;
- Elder Abuse Awareness Week; and
- National Addictions Awareness Week.

Victim Service providers reported participating in other community events, including On the Land Programs, presentations to schools about healthy relationships, grief and loss workshops, domestic violence workshops, information sessions on consent, and women's spa nights. In some communities, Victim Service providers relied on making themselves personally known to community members in order to subtly highlight the services available (e.g. helping out at funerals). Some of these examples of community-specific activities completed over the last few years are highlighted below:

- Yellowknife: The VSP played a major role in an event for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The Program organized cultural activities and participated in the unveiling of the beaded heart tapestry. In February 2018, the Victim Service providers carried out a presentation to high school students along with an information booth with the help of RCMP. Previously, Victim Services organized a community barbeque for National Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. Multiple other agencies assisted with the event (e.g. RCMP, Community justice). About 200 people attended the barbeque. Radio and newspaper ads have been created to increase the awareness of the Program and its services.
- Inuvik: The Program delivered several presentations on healthy relationships and consent to Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson. They presented to Grades 6-12 to a total of 30 students. Consent workshops were also presented to the high school grades in Alklavik and Paulatuk. The Program also attended healthy living fairs around the region.

Hay River: Victim Services teamed up with the Recreation Director to organize a Mother's Day event. This involved a luncheon and community bingo. At the event there was a table with information on Victim Services and other resources. In the last two years, the Program has cooperated with other agencies to organize community events for Sisters in Spirit and Family Violence Awareness Week.

- Fort Smith: Set up an information booth at the Fort Smith Trade show. According to the community narrative reports, about 250 people visited the booth. The Victim Service provider also mentioned during interviews an event they organize called "Lunch with the Bunch." At this event, the Victim Service provider and other community programs explain to seniors what their services are and how they can be helpful.
- Fort Simpson: Organized a three-day workshop for men called "Worriers to Healing." The event was organized in response to increased family violence. In 2017, the Victim Service provider coordinated with other organizations to promote Family Violence Awareness Week, including organizing a community barbeque. Students made posters for the event, there was a march, and t-shirts were hung on the fences of the main road.
- Tłıchǫ: The Victim Service provider attended Family Violence Awareness Week. They also organized a men's On the Land camp in Behchokǫ.

- Tulita: Organized a weekend Youth Group meeting. Meetings involve discussions with youth from the community, where topics can range between politics, religion, differences between victims and criminals, and VCEF/ODARA.
- Fort Good Hope: The Victim Service provider helped organized a grief and loss support group at the request of victims of crime and the general public. It was a weekly event for victims and anyone else needing support. The Victim Service provider has also taken part in National Addictions awareness week to create awareness about the Program via radio and community breakfasts.

These initiatives have had some impact on increasing public awareness about services. Community stakeholders differed in terms of their level of awareness and perceptions about the Program's impact on public awareness of services and crime-related issues. According to community stakeholders, these events are useful and well attended. In one community, a stakeholder noted that *"she [the victim service provider] has been around for a long time, everybody knows her and what she does."* Some community stakeholders believe that awareness of the Program is generally high in communities where services are located, but it may be lower in outreach communities because Victim Service providers rarely travel there. Others suggested that when it comes to awareness it is important that the community organizations and RCMP know about the services. For example, one community stakeholder pointed out that *"the people who need to know about it know, like organizations and RCMP. The public generally are not aware. Unless you need a service, you aren't necessarily aware of it."*

The visibility of the services at the community level appears to be highly dependent on individual efforts and abilities of Victim Service providers and the relationships they have been able to establish. Some have collaborated with other community organizations to find innovative ways to engage the public and build awareness. For example, in one community, the Victim Service provider collaborated with the Justice Coordinator to present at the local science fair. They used the occasion as an opportunity to tell people visiting their booth about the Victim Service Program and the role of the Victim Service provider.

### **The Program lacks the resources and strategic focus to create impactful public awareness and crime prevention initiatives.**

While most community stakeholders reported general awareness about the Program and location of the office, they were often unable to comment on the specific services provided. One stakeholder noted that he was not sure who the current Victim Service provider was. Stakeholders and some sponsoring organization representatives generally believe this to be the case for the wider public as well. For example, a few RCMP officers suggested that there is a minimal level of awareness of services among the people they serve and that they are often the main source of information about services.

Key informants, including government representatives, argued more strongly about the limitations of the government programs in general, and the VSP specifically, to make a collaborative effort to create effective and integrated educational programming and preventative measures addressing the level of crime. Some representatives argued that government resources are spread thin across various programs, which often appears as a 'patched' response to a significant issue facing NWT communities. They reported that many of the activities used to increase public awareness about the impact of crime on victims occur on an ad-hoc basis and lack

appropriate resources, structure and a strategic approach to build awareness and shift focus on preventative strategies. For example, the following arguments have been made:

- The Program lacks resources to create effective public awareness and crime prevention initiatives in the communities. Although key informants recognized that publications and support provided by the territorial government are useful, they also argued that without resources available to providers who are in communities the materials will not be effective in raising public knowledge. Victim service providers also reported that there is very little time left to focus on public engagement activities. Administrative data on the number of services provided shows that, on average, a Victim Service provider provides between 250 to 700 services a year and serves 100 to 300 new clients a year. Nearly all representatives from the sponsoring organizations (e.g. Victims Service providers and coordinators, executive directors) reported that there are very limited resources (e.g. human and capital) for public awareness and educational activities. This aspect of the Program was often sidelined in order to prioritize the high case load and direct services to victims.
- Efforts at the community level are inconsistent and sporadic. For example, some key informants noted that building awareness about the impact of crime is commonly done as part of a few annual events such as Family Violence Awareness Week and National Victims and Survivors of Crime Awareness Week. These events are not reaching everyone and carry negative connotations (e.g. related to being “victims” or “survivors”). It was noted that public knowledge is something that requires a lot of time and effort, as does travelling to connect with people in outreach communities. Some key informants highlighted the need to focus more on educating the community about healthy families and the impact of alcohol on family violence. For example, one respondent specifically called for preventative work aimed at young people and education on how to avoid certain conflict-prone situations. Others suggested educational work on healthy families and healthy parenting in order to reduce the impact of victimization on children.

As noted earlier, representatives of sponsoring organizations noted that more direction and awareness from the government is needed to educate the public about the purpose and eligibility criteria of the VCEF.

### 3.2.5 Strengthening the Capacity of the Service Organization

**Sponsoring organizations differ in their capacity to provide consistent services. Annual training provided by the GNWT has improved the ability of Victim Services providers to meet various needs of victims.**

The eight organizations delivering Victim Services have been in operation for a long time. For example, the K’at’odeeche First Nation and the Native Women’s Association of the NWT have been operating for approximately 40 years, while the Inuvik Justice Committee started its operations 28 years ago. Most of the organizations are governed either by a Chief and a team of councilors or by boards of directors. Some of the differences across sponsoring organizations are as follows:

- Two of eight sponsoring organizations are NGOs while others are run by the local government.
- One organization has three FTEs (a coordinator and two Victim Service providers); one has two FTEs (one of whom is outreach); one has 1.5 FTEs (part-time position shared with an outreach provider); and three organizations have one FTE. Two communities lost their

Victim Service providers during the course of the evaluation and these positions remain vacant.

- All organizations run at least one other program (e.g. justice committee, Community Wellness programs, On the Land programs, homelessness programs etc.)
- The experience of current Victim Service providers employed by the organizations ranges from two months to 18 years. Four organizations have Victim Service providers who have been in their role for over three years.
- Some organizations have challenges securing private space for walk-in clients.

*Training from the GNWT and sponsoring organizations*

As part of strengthening the capacity of organizations in their ability to deliver Victim Services, the GNWT provided annual training to the Victim Services Program. The table below shows the trainings delivered by the GNWT from 2013/14 to 2019/20. Each year, there are a number of workshops available and service providers are offered an opportunity to attend a conference on topics related to their line of work (e.g. this year, most Victim Service providers attended the Diverse Voices Conference). Some of the most common topics covered year to year include training on court preparation, trauma-informed approaches, and topics related to family violence. Training related to court preparation and accompaniment covered areas such as court processes, roles and outcomes, VIS and restitution funds, anxiety and relaxation techniques, and topics specifically related to children (e.g. preparing child witnesses, understanding child abuse).

**Table 20: Training Provided by the GNWT (2014/15 to 2019/20)**

Year	Training	Example of themes/modules*
2014/15	Addressing Violence and Injustice Through Response-based Practice – Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Response-based Practice with Perpetrators and Victims</li> <li>▪ Addressing RCMP responses to Indigenous Women</li> <li>▪ Embodied Responses to Interpersonal Violence</li> <li>▪ Responding to Abuse of Older Adults</li> </ul>
	Trauma-informed Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supporting people with trauma</li> <li>▪ Effects on service providers</li> </ul>
	Together We’re Better: Building community resources & partnerships - Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Justice networks</li> <li>▪ Building partnerships: community networks</li> </ul>
2015/16	First Responder to Sexual Assault Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical Communication Skills for First Response</li> <li>▪ Child Sexual Abuse</li> <li>▪ Adults Who Were Sexually Abused as Children</li> <li>▪ Sexual Harassment</li> <li>▪ Sexual Assault</li> <li>▪ Rethinking Prevention</li> </ul>
	CVBR Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Background &amp; development of CVBR</li> <li>▪ Implementing the CVBR in NWT</li> </ul>
2016/17	Critical Incident and Stress Management workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intro to CISM</li> <li>▪ Demobilization, defusing, and crisis management briefing</li> </ul>
2017/18	Court Preparation & Court Accompaniment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Court roles and processes</li> <li>▪ Understanding child abuse</li> <li>▪ Wellness and vicarious trauma</li> <li>▪ Fears, anxieties, and relaxation</li> <li>▪ Mock court</li> <li>▪ Wellness and Vicarious Trauma</li> </ul>

Year	Training	Example of themes/modules*
2018/19	VSW and CJC Winter Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grief and Loss (Caregiver’s Role) Workshop</li> <li>▪ Trauma Informed training</li> <li>▪ Family violence and protection orders</li> <li>▪ Regional planning and brainstorming</li> </ul>
2019/20	Diverse Voices Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Domestic violence in later life</li> <li>▪ The men’s shed movement</li> <li>▪ Stalking and the crime of criminal harassment</li> <li>▪ Assessing and planning for complex families</li> </ul>
	Child Witness Court Preparation Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child abuse</li> <li>▪ Accommodations</li> <li>▪ VIS/Restitution</li> <li>▪ Role of the advocate</li> <li>▪ Mock Court</li> <li>▪ Vicarious Trauma and self-care</li> </ul>

Source: Training Activities provided by GNWT; \*the themes listed are not exhaustive.

The provision of best practices training for vicarious trauma and self-care has been integrated into the main annual training provided by the GNWT:

- In 2017/18, the self-care training was included in the Program alongside court preparation accompaniment. The self-care training included understanding different types of secondary traumatic stress disorders, understanding risk factors, and developing a vicarious trauma action plan.
- In 2019/20, the self-care training was included in the Program alongside child witness court preparation. The self-care training involved video presentations and exercises.

Victim Service providers generally spoke positively about the training they received from the GNWT. Some talked about how useful it was to meet the other colleagues and exchange ideas and share their knowledge and experiences. It was also emphasized that it is important to continue to provide training that promotes trauma-informed approaches. In terms of further training, Victim Service providers listed several topics they would be interested in related to child safety training, critical incident training, safety plans, and self-defense for Victim Service providers.

Some concerns were raised about the lack of formal requirements for ongoing professional development by the government. For example, Victim Service providers can attend the training only if sponsoring organizations have the capacity to manage demand or have someone who can deliver the services for the duration of the training. This results in some Victim Service providers not being able to attend the training. For example, during an interview, one Victim Service provider stated that they would not be attending upcoming training as they were too busy with their work. As several GNWT representatives noted, although the Justice Department provides opportunities for training, attendance is not mandatory. There are no requirements for Victim Service providers to take the training that is offered and no obligation to implement the training that is received.

**There is little formalized, in-house training and supportive infrastructure established by sponsoring organizations.**

Beyond what is provided by GNWT, Victim Service providers did not mention receiving much formal training from the sponsoring organizations, other than on-the-job training. Only one



sponsoring organization delivered its own formalized in-house training. This was training on trauma-informed care to all staff in the organization. The representatives interviewed suggested that:

- Organizations have minimal onboarding processes in place. Most training for new employees is job shadowing or on-the-job training. In organizations where there is more than one Victim Service provider, experienced providers offer informal training to those new to the position. A few providers noted that they often have to call the office in Yellowknife for any questions regarding courts and specific incidents (e.g. when children are involved). Only one organization had written instruction on how to interact with victims and deliver services. Volunteers would benefit from some formal training given that they are often called in to assist in challenging situations.
- There is lack of internal protocols and structure to support delivery of services. It was noted that the effectiveness of the services is highly dependent on providers' experience, their knowledge and understanding of issues, community resources and resources available within the government department. Half of the Victim Service providers have been in their role for a long time and noted that they do not require much training or documented instructions, and even suggested that they could easily provide training required for the job. However, lack of structures, protocols and written documentation regarding services, resources, contacts and best practices can undermine organizational ability to ensure continuity of knowledge and institutional memory. Loss of organizational memory and capacities faced by NGOs due to lack of structure and systems, as well as high turnover, are well documented.<sup>47</sup>
- There is a lack of strategy to address high turnover in some communities due to factors such as vicarious trauma, lateral violence in the workplace, cost of living and other more desirable job opportunities at government. Lateral violence, meaning violence – verbal or otherwise – directed at members of one's own group, is a significant issue in Northern communities. This can take the form of infighting, gossip, or otherwise denigrating behaviours toward one's peers within social settings like the workplace.<sup>48</sup> A few respondents talked about presence of lateral violence in their workplace and the term was used to describe relationships within the sponsoring organization. Concerns were raised that the territorial government has no requirement to protect Victim Service providers from lateral violence. It was also noted that Victim Service providers, after gaining some experience in the Victim Service role, take jobs with government which offer better wages and benefits packages.

**The government has allocated new funds for self-care and mental health support for Victim Service providers. At the time of the evaluation only a few providers have used them.**

Though the Victim Service provider may work alongside others in their sponsoring organization (e.g. restorative justice provider, wellness coordinator), the role is mostly independent and autonomous. Some respondents commented on the isolating nature of the position in terms of the lack of direction and supports and the lack of colleagues to debrief with. One Victim Service

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<sup>47</sup> Dalkir, K. (2009) Organizational Memory Challenges Faced by Non-Profit Organizations. 165-183. <http://biblio.uabcs.mx/html/libros/pdf/1/c12.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Bombay, A. (2014), "Origins of Lateral Violence in Aboriginal Communities," Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2014, 2. <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/lateral-violence-english.pdf>.

provider stated that “*nobody would understand what the victim service providers go through every day. It’s such a struggle to not let it bother you.*” Some Victim Service providers spoke of receiving very few supports and time for self-care.

In April 2018, Justice Canada amended the *Victims of Crime Funding Agreement – A Framework for Enhancing Victim Services in the NWT*, to include mental health support for Victim Service providers. This special funding covers four areas: mental health support for vicarious trauma; the promotion of a peer support network; the provision of best practices training for Vicarious trauma and self-care; and the provision of debriefing sessions.

While providers are generally aware of the fund, at the time of the evaluation, very few had used it. One provider suggested that finding the time was a significant barrier for them accessing self-care. In this case, the Victim Service provider described being willing to access such care but that there were too many clients and too many responsibilities to step away from.

### 3.3 Design and Delivery

The following section provides a summary of the evaluation findings regarding the appropriateness of the Victim Service Program design and delivery structure.

#### 3.3.1 Community-Based Model

**The community-based model for delivering Victim Services has numerous advantages and is generally supported by most key informants.**

There are many different types of Victim Services in Canada offered by governments, police services, courts, volunteers, non-governmental organizations and other specialized community organizations. According to Statistics Canada's Victim Services Survey 2011/2012, 36% of victim services in Canada are police-based, 24% are provided by community-based not-for-profit organizations, 10% are court-based and 7% system-based. A description of each model is provided in Appendix 3.

Given the NWT context, key informants generally agreed that community-based delivery has a number of advantages, including:

- **Community members helping their community:** Having community members deliver services was commonly seen as an advantage; community members tend to have a better understanding of the local context, politics, resources, and existing dynamics between people. Key informants suggested that victims are more comfortable approaching somebody they trust and believe will understand their culture and community. In some communities, the Victim Service provider is well known and seen generally as a ‘helper’ who is called upon for a broad range of tragedies and community emergencies. For example, some Victim Service providers told stories of accompanying the RCMP to next of kin notifications after a death in the community, assisting in the aftermath of apartment fires, assisting in cleaning up the crime scene, etc.
- **Flexibility:** The community-based model allows for more flexibility in how Victim Service providers approach their role and what supports they provide (e.g. one Victim Service provider noted that she provided transportation to victims and even allowed someone to



spend a night at their home). This would not be allowed in a more structured and rigid government-like system, where boundaries with respect to the types of services delivered are more strongly imposed. As one provider put it: *“I would quit if government was to come here and tell me what I can or can not do to help my community.”* Given that each client has a unique set of circumstances, flexibility was considered crucial to effectively delivering the services. For example, victims do not have to report the crime to access services and may be less likely to fear that Victim Services providers will disclose information to authorities. Unlike other services (e.g. Court Witness Coordinators), victims can access supports provided by the VSP at any time prior, during or after the court process. A few Victim Service providers noted that they offer emotional support, information and encouragement to the family members of victims (e.g. mothers or grandmothers worried about family abuse).

- **Community organizations are perceived as more trustworthy since they are separated from the justice system.** Research has shown that Indigenous people continue to have less confidence in the police and justice system.<sup>49</sup> Most key informants suggested that having an NGO or local government deliver services not only builds local capacity, but also increases the likelihood that victims will access the services. Community stakeholders noted that the RCMP and ‘mainstream’ services are seen as part of the old system that imposed colonial practices, and many people find them intimidating. As such, having the Program delivered through a community organization rather than a government is seen as being more informal and comfortable for clients.

**However, there are significant disadvantages associated with the current design and structure, which negatively impact on access and quality of services. The most commonly noted disadvantages are related to confidentiality, dependence on RCMP referrals, leadership and stability of sponsoring organizations, and ability to recruit and retain high-quality providers.**

Although most key informants expressed their support for the community-based model, most also recognized that there are significant disadvantages associated with the current design that negatively impact access and quality of supports. Disadvantages of the current model are discussed below.

- **Community dynamics and concerns about confidentiality.** In many communities, particularly smaller communities which have only a few hundred members, people are likely to know each other, and families are often connected through marriage or other relations. Given the stigma and shame associated with being a victim, key informants raised concerns about victims’ willingness to talk to someone to whom they or their perpetrators are related, or someone who is a next-door neighbour or relative or

*“The go-to person might be a relative or someone they [victims] know. Sometimes hurt feelings can last generations. There can be lasting family feuds in the community which mean some people won’t engage with certain others in the community.” – Community stakeholder interview*

<sup>49</sup> Boyce, J. (2016) Victimization of Aboriginal people in Canada, 2014. Juristat no. 85-002-X. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14631-eng.htm#r10>.

who has a powerful position in the community. Political and other community dynamics can impact continuity of service provision and who can access services. For example, in many communities, sponsoring organizations are not independent from political or other community dynamic influences. This can create significant barriers to access for some victims.

- **Dependence on RCMP referrals.** More than two thirds of victims served across all communities were referred to Victim Services through other sources, most of which (over 60% in the last two years according to administrative data) were referrals by the RCMP. Sources of referral vary across communities. According to the administrative data reported by communities, the RCMP accounts for a majority of referrals in almost all communities (representing over 80% of referrals in two communities). As noted by some community stakeholders, the heavy reliance on RCMP referrals reflects the limitations of the Program design in terms of reaching victims of underreported crime and more proactively serving communities.
- **Delayed first point of contact.** Some key informants, particularly the RCMP, reported that the victims are most in need of support, including information or emotional support, in the immediate aftermath of the crime when police arrive to their house or the crime scene. This is when victims are most in shock, feel most vulnerable and scared, and may feel intimidated by the presence of the police officers. RCMP officers noted that it would be useful to have Victim Service providers accompany them on certain calls (e.g. accusations of sexual abuse, violent crimes and tragedies, etc.) to provide comfort and encouragement to victims. They also reported that many victims do not accept their referrals to Victim Services and some expressed strong doubts that victims who do accept the referrals actually follow up on the recommendation and reach out to Victim Services for help. Data from Mayors' Reports show that, in 2018-19, 37% of victims declined RCMP referrals to Victim Services (according to 2019/20 data, the percentage of those who declined service has jumped to 57%).<sup>50</sup> Assuming that, on average, 80% of new clients served by victims services are referred by the RCMP (as reported in administrative data), we can estimate that, on average, over the last three years, just over half of clients who were referred by the RCMP actually accessed the Program.<sup>51</sup> When RCMP officers were asked why some victims refuse the referral to Victim Services, they reported that victims usually require assistance immediately rather than after the fact. For example, it was noted that, in cases of family violence where alcohol and drugs are involved, victims often reach out (e.g. call the police) and want assistance when they feel threatened. As soon as their partners (or both parties) sober up, they are unlikely to seek further help. A few Victim Service providers also suggested that there is a lost opportunity to help victims and support them when they are the most vulnerable.
- **Fragmented services:** While the separation of Victim Services from the justice system is perceived by many as beneficial, it also contributes to further fragmentation of the system

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<sup>50</sup> Mayor's Reports on number of RCMP to Victim Services referrals and number of refusals.

<sup>51</sup> Please note that these are estimates only and used to illustrate when and how clients may access services. The average is over 3 years for which Mayoral data on referrals is available. The percent of new clients served vs. those referred varied significantly across the years (from over 70% in 2016/17 to only 38% in 2018/19). This may be the result of improved records from RCMP regarding number of referrals.

of supports. Some key informants and community stakeholders noted that many of the programs available in the community provide services to the same clients. Individuals who are particularly at risk (multi-barriered) are “falling through the cracks of the system” because there is lack of integrated approach and wrap-around supports. Some community stakeholders noted that the ‘southern’ system of public services is failing to address the need of victims because they are not victim centric. Too many variables play a role in determining whether victims receive timely and responsive support, including when and by whom they are referred to Victim Services, the availability and ability of Victim Service providers to assess the need of victims and link them to appropriate services, and the ability and willingness of victims to follow up and reach other supports.

- Leadership and stability of sponsoring organizations:** Stability and independence of sponsoring organizations from real or perceived political pressures is crucial for ensuring continuity of services. Over the course of this evaluation (within 6 months), two communities lost and did not replace their Victim Service providers. In a few communities, Victims Service providers talked about instability within the sponsoring organizations, infighting among organizational staff, and lack of leadership and support for providers, especially in times of crisis.
- Challenges with recruitment and retention:** Non-government organizations anywhere, and particularly in the North, face significant disadvantages with regards to recruiting and retaining qualified providers. They often compete with government and other public organizations that offer higher pay, better benefits, more support and job stability. It is also difficult to retain those who are hired due to factors such as an unclear career path, lack of benefits, and burnout. Many communities have difficulties recruiting staff from the communities given the limited pool of qualified candidates.

**Limited resources allocated for Victim Service providers’ travel to outreach communities further constrains access to the services.**

According to administrative data, over two thirds of services are provided over the phone or by email. This is not surprising given that most services (over 50%) involve brief interactions, including provision of information and referrals. Service delivery methods vary across communities. In some communities, especially those delivering outreach, a substantial percentage of their services are delivered over the phone. In Hay River and Tłı̨chǫ, over two thirds of services are delivered via email. Over the past four years, there has been a shift away from providing information primarily by telephone to a relatively even balance between telephone and email. Only two communities reported providing most of its services in person.

**Table 21: Types of Delivery Methods (2015/16 to 2018/19)**

Type of Delivery Methods		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Telephone</b>		<b>1,925</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>2,088</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>2,076</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Email</b>		<b>326</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>1,936</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>In Person</b>	<i>Victim Services Office</i>	449	14%	551	12%	714	15%	757	14%
	<i>Public Location</i>	205	6%	325	7%	260	5%	285	5%
	<i>Other office</i>	187	6%	231	5%	148	3%	150	3%
	<i>Victim's/Friend's House Person</i>	155	5%	122	3%	193	4%	230	4%
	<b>Total in Person</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>1229</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>1315</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>1422</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Emergency Call-out</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1%</b>



<b>Total</b>	<b>3,295</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,558</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,748</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,485</b>	<b>100%</b>
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Source: VSP Administrative Data (2015/16 -2018/19)

Representatives of sponsoring organizations, including Victim Service providers, noted that, except for brief provisions of information, providing services over the phone can be effective but only after a personal, face-to-face connection has been made and trust has been established. Some services are more suited to telephone or online delivery, such as answering questions about the court process or referrals. Emotional support can be very difficult to provide over the phone, although a few Victim Service providers said they had some long phone conversations with victims with whom they had previously established relationships.

The limited time and resources available for traveling to outreach communities impacts the ability of Victim Service providers to build trust and relationships in outlying communities, not only with clients but also with available community services. Most Victim Service providers recognize the challenges related to travelling (i.e. the large distances between communities as well as time, effort and cost associated with travel). However, many noted that more efforts should be made to create opportunities for Victim Service providers to occasionally accompany court personnel on their travel to communities.

Technology has become more prevalent in how services are provided, particularly to younger victims. One Victim Service provider noted that most people in her region own smartphones and use Facebook to get in touch with her or ask her questions. Video technology is not at all or is very rarely used. This was attributed to limited connectivity and privacy issues. However, some studies have demonstrated the effectiveness and feasibility of videoconferencing technology to provide evidence-based treatment to rural domestic violence and sexual assault populations.<sup>52</sup> This is further discussed under the best practices section of the report.

**It is important to build some flexibility into the Program’s design to better enable the Program to respond to the specific needs and environment in each community. However, there are concerns that, as result of this flexibility, program delivery has drifted away from some of the original objectives and expectations that were established for the Program.**

For example:

- The Program is designed as a frontline service (to be the first point of contact for victims) with an emphasis on information and referrals to other services. Yet in many cases, Victim Service providers are the second, if not the third point of contact (dependent on the referrals from RCMP and other service providers). Providers commonly provide continuous care (continuous cases represent 31% of all services provided), taking more of a case management approach that provides more comprehensive, victim-centered and long-term support. For example, ongoing emotional support and after-court care is often

<sup>52</sup> Hassija, C. & Gray, M. (2011) “The Effectiveness and Feasibility of Videoconferencing Technology to Provide Evidence-Based Treatment to Rural Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Populations”. *Telemedicine and e-Health*, 17:4, 309-315

[https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/tmj.2010.0147?rfr\\_dat=cr\\_pub%3Dpubmed&url\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr\\_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&journalCode=tmj](https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/tmj.2010.0147?rfr_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&journalCode=tmj)



provided (e.g. helping victims deal with the court decisions or working with victims to help them deal with cycles of abusive behaviors, etc.)

- In addition to providing services directly to clients, Victim Service providers are expected to provide services to the public (e.g. to increase public understanding of impacts of victimization on persons and communities). As noted previously, this tends to be delivered on an ad-hoc, inconsistent basis across communities with little coordinated support (e.g. leadership, sharing of best practices, collaborative initiatives, etc.). As some key informants highlighted, investment in this aspect of the Program and more generally in government-wide prevention efforts is lacking.
- The services are intended to be trauma informed and client centric. This requires working closely together with community and other partners, sharing information and establishing protocols for addressing specific issues related to crime and victimization. The evaluation found that although the relationship with the RCMP is good in most communities, effective collaboration and information sharing is done sporadically (rather than systematically and with clearly established objectives).
- There is little government oversight and monitoring. Sound management and systems of accountability provide the strong backbone necessary to support sustainable direct services to victims. The Government of the NWT is responsible and accountable for providing equitable, quality services to all victims. However, due to the current contractual agreements, the government has very little control or oversight over quality of service (e.g. qualifications of providers and training requirements), the services provided, and the reliability of information collected and reported by sponsoring organizations.

**Although the VCEF is perceived as timely and efficient, some confusion about its mandate and eligibility requirements results in inconsistent application of the funds.**

Most key informants familiar with the VCEF reported that administration of the fund is timely, straightforward and efficient. Victim Service providers reported that the form is easy to fill out and that the approval process is usually very fast.

The fact sheet for the NWT Victims of Crime Emergency Fund defines the target groups, eligibility requirements (e.g. victim of serious violent crime), types of crime and types of expenses that are (and are not) covered by the fund.<sup>53</sup> The review of the VCEF (2008) defined victim eligibility as being someone who has been directly victimized by the crime and not a perpetrator of the crime; the crime took place within the Northwest Territories, and the crime perpetrated is one that is covered by the Program.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the above-noted requirements, most Victim Services providers noted that the crime had to have occurred within the last two months and that there should be a police file (a few Victim Service providers noted that they would follow up with the RCMP detachment to find the police file number). While all Victim Service providers recognize the need for managerial

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<sup>53</sup> GNWT, VCEF Fact Sheet. <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/victims-of-crime-emergency-fund/Emergency%20Fund%20Fund%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Meyers Norris Penny (2008). *Report on Victims of Crime Emergency Fund*. Regina, Saskatchewan: MNP.

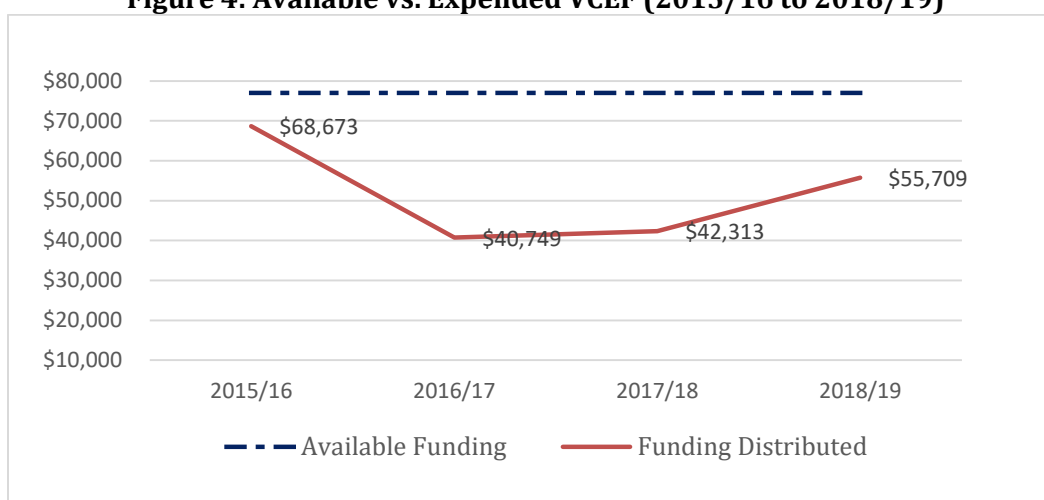
discretion in decision-making, most reported some confusion regarding the VCEF’s mandate and objectives which contributed to inconsistency in its use.

The following concerns were raised regarding how the requirements of the fund are applied:

- Funds are intended for victims of serious crime but have also been allocated to, for example, victims of an apartment fire and victims of circumstance.
- Applicants who are victims of an ‘old crime’ (e.g. crime that has been committed within the last year rather than within the last few months) are sometimes told by the Victim Service provider that they are not eligible for funding. A two-month time frame set out in the requirements was perceived to be too rigid and did meet the needs for some victims.
- Victims of break and entry request funds to cover expenses that should be covered by the landlord or housing department, not the VCEF. For example, one representative of the GNWT spoke about concerns that tenants are being asked to access the fund to repair damage in their rental unit after break-ins. This respondent felt that, in this sense, the fund was being used to aid private business interests rather than victims of crime.
- Victims may be requesting funds for a new phone or new minutes although they are back with their partners and no new crime may have been committed.

Data on the distribution of funding over past four years suggest that some requirements may be applied too rigidly in some communities. As illustrated in the following chart, the amount of funding distributed dipped significantly in 2016/17 and 2017/18 before increasing somewhat in 2018/19, despite the fact that violent crimes increased over the same time period.

**Figure 4: Available vs. Expended VCEF (2015/16 to 2018/19)**



A few key informants noted that the approval process, although timely, can represent an unnecessary administrative burden, particularly when small amounts of funding are requested. For example, most applications are for phones or emergency minutes (usually involving less than

\$100 in phone credits); however, processing this application requires the involvement of multiple staff before the funds can be released. It was therefore suggested that better guidelines be developed regarding eligibility for funding and that small requests (e.g. grocery cards, emergency phone minutes) be distributed by sponsoring organizations. This will result in faster and more direct access to funding and empower Victim Service providers to make decisions (something they are already doing) and distribute funds. Approvals for travel, special circumstances and larger amounts (e.g. over \$500) should remain within the GNWT and should involve more discretionary decision-making.

### 3.3.2 Appropriateness of Resources

**The budget for program delivery is distributed through a series of contribution agreements (CAs) with the sponsoring organizations, most of which is allocated to staff wages and benefits.**

The total cost of the Program was about was \$1.5 million annually, including contributions from federal and territorial governments and excluding VCEF funding. Most of the budget (\$967,500) is distributed through CAs to the sponsoring organizations. The remainder is used to offset costs within the GNWT, which amounts to 35% of the total Program budget. Three GNWT employees were involved in program delivery including the program manager, program coordinator, and the CVBR Analyst.

As indicated below, 74% of the CA funding is allocated to cover the costs of wages and benefits. Most of the other funding (19%) is allocated to rent, communications and administrative costs. Travel budgets tend to be very low; four communities have no budget for travel.

**Table 22: Allocation of Funding from CAs by Community (2018/19)**

Communities (FY 2018-19)	Wages & Benefits		Training		Travel		Other (Rent, Comm, Admin)		Total
	\$	% of total	\$	% of total	\$	% of total	\$	% of total	
Inuvik	\$71,000	79%	\$4,000	4%	\$1,200	1%	\$13,800	15%	\$90,000
Beaufort-Delta	\$76,500	85%	\$4,000	4%	\$1,200	1%	\$8,300	9%*	\$90,000
Hay River	\$63,000	70%	\$6,000	7%	\$1,800	2%	\$19,200	21%	\$90,000
Hay River Outreach (part-time)	\$30,500	45%	\$10,000	15%	\$8,000	12%	\$19,000	28%	\$67,500
Yellowknife (Coordinator)	\$84,000	93%	\$2,000	2%	\$3,000	3%	\$1,000	1%*	\$90,000
Yellowknife (Provider)	\$79,168	88%	-	0%	-	0%	\$10,832	12%	\$90,000
Tłı̨chǫ Region (Coordinator)	\$70,000	78%	\$7,500	8%	-	0%	\$12,500	14%	\$90,000
Fort Good Hope	\$64,000	71%	-	0%	\$3,500	4%	\$22,500	25%	\$90,000
Fort Simpson	\$62,000	69%	-	0%	\$2,800	3%	\$25,200	28%	\$90,000
Tulita	\$60,000	67%	\$5,000	6%	-	0%	\$25,000	28%	\$90,000
Fort Smith	\$60,000	67%	\$1,500	2%	-	0%	\$28,500	32%	\$90,000



Communities (FY 2018-19)	Wages & Benefits		Training		Travel		Other (Rent, Comm, Admin)		Total
	\$	% of total	\$	% of total	\$	% of total	\$	% of total	
Total	\$720,168	74%	\$40,000	4%	\$21,500	2%	\$185,832	19%	\$967,500

Source: CA (2018-2020); FY 2018-19

\*Note that admin costs are shared for Inuvik and Beaufort-Delta providers as well as Yellowknife coordinator and provider

**The costs of the Program, based on the existing CAs, is equal to about \$1,500 per new client and about \$200 per case.**

Average costs have been calculated using the existing CA values and the average number of new clients and annual cases over the past four years. As indicated in the table below, based on this data, the average cost per new client served annually is \$1,533 while the average cost per case (including brief service, new clients, and continuing cases) is \$195. Reflecting differences in the volume of clients and cases served by community, the average cost per new client and case range varies widely across communities (e.g. the cost per new client ranges from about \$200 to over \$1,000 and the cost per case ranges from \$70 to over \$250 across various communities).

**Table 23: Direct Service Costs**

Direct Service Costs	
Annual Contribution to Direct Service (11FTEs at \$90,000)	\$967,500
Average Number of New Clients (Average Annual Last 4 Years)	631
<b>Average Cost per New Client</b>	<b>\$1,533</b>
Average Annual Cases (Brief Service, New Clients, Continuing Cases)	4,960
<b>Average Cost per Case</b>	<b>\$195</b>

Source: CAs, Program Administrative Data

Most key informants believe that the Program is under-resourced. Additional funding would enable the Program to increase the level and quality of services provided. A few concerns were also expressed about the allocation of funding, with key informants arguing that some communities should receive more funding than others given differences in population, the number of clients served, wage costs, size of the region, access to other supports in the community, and level and type of crime. Analysis of regional data on number of police-reported incidents suggest that the ratio of incidents per FTE Victim Service provider ranges widely, from an average of about 600 to over 2,700 across the six regions.

**The cost of crime to victims and society is significant. Victims experience direct economic losses and may suffer long-lasting emotional and psychological consequences. Society bears the cost of operating policing, court, and correctional systems as well as related programs and services, which can amount to thousands of dollars per incident.**

The overall cost of crime is substantial for both victims and society overall.

***Cost of Crime to Victims***





Most of the costs of crime are borne by victims themselves. The most substantial costs to victims of a criminal incident, especially a violent incident, are the intangible costs related to pain and suffering.<sup>55</sup> The emotional and psychological toll of criminal activity can last years and result in life-long consequences, including trauma-related symptoms, depression, addiction, damage to relationships, and other adverse experiences. Direct economic costs to victims range from medical treatment, lost wages, and missed school days to stolen and damaged property.<sup>56</sup> Productivity losses make up a substantial portion of the economic costs of crime to victims, with lost productivity being associated with “people who are unable to work, find it difficult to work, or have to take time off to deal with the consequences after an incident.”<sup>57</sup>

Data relating to the exact costs per victim of crime in Canada is not available. However, several studies have produced estimates of the aggregate costs to victims of crime in Canada. Examining data from 2009, the best year for which data was available, a 2014 study completed by the Fraser Institute estimated that the total cost to victims of crime in Canada stood at \$63.7 billion (in 2012 Canadian dollars).<sup>58</sup> Another 2014 study looking specifically at five types of violent crime – assault, criminal harassment, homicide, robbery, and sexual assault – estimated that the total cost of just these crimes to victims was \$10.6 billion in 2009.<sup>59</sup> These figures attempt to capture both directly measurable economic costs, like productivity losses and the value of stolen and damaged goods, as well as intangible costs like pain and suffering.

### ***Cost of Crime to Society***

Crime also carries significant costs for society at large. The most obvious costs to society are criminal justice system expenditures involving policing, the courts, and corrections.<sup>60</sup> Other costs borne by society include administrative costs incurred by employers while employees are unable to work, lost additional output for employers, the cost of social programs and services (including community centres and other support centres accessible to victims), and expenditures related to operating crisis lines and other similar services.<sup>61</sup>

The total cost of crime to Canadian society, including both costs to victims and costs to the justice system, was estimated by the Fraser Institute researchers to have been \$85.2 billion (in 2012 dollars) in the year 2009, amounting to over \$2500 per Canadian.<sup>62,63</sup> Costs relating to the five previously discussed violent crimes (assault, criminal harassment, homicide, robbery, and sexual

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<sup>55</sup> Hoddenbagh, J., Zhang, T., McDonald, S (2014) “An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Violent Victimization in Canada, 2009”. Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada,19. [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr14\\_01/rr14\\_01.pdf](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr14_01/rr14_01.pdf).

<sup>56</sup> Johnston-Way, S. and O’Sullivan, S (2016) “Recognizing the role of victim supports in building and maintaining healthy and safe communities,” *Journal of Community Safety & Well-being* 1, no. 2:13. <https://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/res/pub/jcswb-cswb/index.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Easton, S., Furness, H and Brantingham, P (2014) “The Cost of Crime in Canada”. Fraser Institute, 43.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pg.44. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/research/cost-crime-canada-2014-report>.

<sup>59</sup> Hoddenbagh, Zhang, and McDonald, 4-6.

<sup>60</sup> Gabor, T (2016) “Costs of Crime and Criminal Justice Responses,” Public Safety Canada, 2016, 9. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2015-r022/2015-r022-en.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> Hoddenbagh, Zhang, and McDonald, 80-82.

<sup>62</sup> Easton, Furness, and Brantingham, 95.

<sup>63</sup> Statistics Canada, “Population,” Canada at a Glance 2015, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2015000/pop-eng.htm>.

assault) were estimated to have been \$12.7 billion that same year, translating to \$376 per Canadian.<sup>64</sup>

One study estimated the cost of specific types of offenses. In a report for Public Safety Canada, Gabor (2016) used estimates from 65 different studies to product the cost-per-incident estimates shown in the table below. While most of the studies that Gabor reviewed were not from Canada (over half of the studies were based on U.S. data, for instance), the estimated cost of crime in 2014 Canadian dollars ranged between a few million dollars per homicide to tens of thousands of dollars for assaults and other type of crimes.

**Table 24: Estimates of the Cost per Incident of Certain Offenses (2016)**

Offense	Estimated Total Cost Per Incident in 2014 \$ Canadian
Homicide	\$4,837,018 - \$5,904,357
Sexual Assault/Rape	\$136,372 - \$164,417
Assault	\$19,075 - \$203,555
Aggravated Assault	\$98,945 - \$167,472
Robbery	\$28,056 - \$92,350
Motor Vehicle Theft	\$8,157 - \$9,641
Arson	\$45,958 - \$49,807
Residential Burglary	\$5,928 - \$6,228
Theft	\$1,330 - \$2,627
Fraud	\$45,030

Source: Thomas Gabor, "Costs of Crime and Criminal Justice Responses," Public Safety Canada, 2016

Other studies have estimated the costs for offences that resulted in official conviction in court for a 15-year period and found that the aggregate costs for each of the four components were \$182 million in aggregate victim costs, \$122 million in aggregate correctional costs, and \$366 million in aggregate other Criminal Justice System costs. The aggregate cost of offending for the sample was \$671 million or \$1,739,176 per person over the 15-year follow-up period.<sup>65</sup>

**In the absence of these Victim Services, it is very likely that victims would not be able to access most services while other supports such as information would have to be provided by more expensive resources (e.g. RCMP, courts).**

When asked what would happen if the Victim Services Program was not available, most key informants suggested that victims would not receive support, apart from some information services that would be provided through much more costly and less accessible resources such as the RCMP and courts. RCMP representatives noted that not having Victim Services would add a burden to an already overburdened system and significantly distract from their work of conducting investigations and solving crime.

The cost per new victim served and per case managed annually is significantly lower when compared to other services. For example, as a point of reference:

<sup>64</sup> Hoddenbagh, Zhang, and McDonald, 3, 7.

<sup>65</sup> Day, D.M., Koegl, C.J., Rossman, L., Oziel, S. (2015) The Monetary Cost of Criminal Trajectories for an Ontario Sample of Offenders. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mntry-cst-crmnl-trjctrs/report-en.pdf>.

- The cost of policing in NWT per criminal code violation incident was \$3,450<sup>66</sup>;
- Estimated costs per participant in the Mainstream Justice System (taken as the sum of the court, prosecution and legal aid costs per case), was \$4,400 in 2014, and the average cost per participant of the Aboriginal Justice Strategy programs was estimated to be about \$2,800.<sup>67</sup>
- In 2008, estimated average costs for providing Victim Services per agency in Canada was \$263,181.<sup>68</sup>

Given these expenditures and previously discussed cost of crime per offender and incident, it can be argued that the programs focusing on reducing re-victimization and crime prevention, including the Victim Service Program in the NWT, are significantly underfunded. Some key informants interviewed argued that the GNWT should restructure its approach to crime prevention and victim support and ensure that investments are responsive to the needs of communities.

### 3.4 Lessons Learned and Best Practices

The following section provides a summary of the lessons learned, which were identified during the interviews and community visits. It also presents findings regarding different approaches and best practices that were identified through a review of Victim Services delivered in other jurisdictions.

#### 3.4.1 Lessons Learned from the Communities

Key informants identified a range of lessons learned and factors contributing to the success of the Program:

- **Capability and personality of individual Victim Service providers.** Stakeholders in various communities remarked on the importance of the personality, commitment and dependability of the person delivering the service. Victim Service providers were commonly described as committed, resourceful, compassionate, and dependable. Many stakeholders commented on the fact that the role requires a strong, outgoing personality in order to be visible and get the job done. The ability of Victim Service providers to build trust with the wider community was also identified as key to effectiveness of the services. In communities where the Program was successful, the provider was generally well known and trusted. As one stakeholder put it: *"[The victim service provider] goes above and beyond – she busts right through barriers. She's committed to getting the job done."*

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<sup>66</sup> RCMP costs in 2017/18 totalled \$65 million, for 18,842 criminal violations

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00015-eng.pdf?st=h-Q34hf5>.

<sup>67</sup> Department of Justice, Canada (2016). Evaluation of the Aboriginal Justice Strategy. Ottawa: Department of Justice, Canada. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/rep-rap/2016/ajs-sja/ajs-sja.pdf>.

<sup>68</sup> According to information collected from 679 victim service agencies (excluding compensation programs), the cost of providing formal services to victims of crime in Canada was \$178.7 million in 2007/2008.

Costs of Crime in Canada, 2008: [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/crime/rr10\\_5/c.html#ct4](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/crime/rr10_5/c.html#ct4).

- **Strong relationship with the RCMP.** In addition to being a significant source of referrals for the services, the RCMP also plays an important role in outreach activities and in supporting the safety of clients and Victim Service providers. In some communities, the RCMP has helped to spread the word about the VSP by having flyers in the detachment and having the Victim Service provider's contact information on their own business cards. In other communities, RCMP officers described accompanying Victim Service providers on home visits to support their safety. In communities where the Program was particularly successful, RCMP and the Victim Service providers had frequent contact with each other. In some communities, the two agencies have built a partnership that goes beyond providing referrals to organizing public events together, participating in each other's events, and maintaining ongoing communication. In one community, the Victim Service provider and RCMP detachment commander had breakfast together weekly. In describing their successful relationship, this RCMP commander stated: *"We don't just talk when we need something from each other; we have continuous dialogue."*
- **Broadening the scope of services to victims of tragedy.** In some communities, Victim Service providers were called upon when a tragedy occurred in the community, regardless of whether a crime had occurred (e.g. apartment fires or a significant death in the community). During an interview, one community stakeholder described the provider's relationship to the community in the following way: *"People are aware of her, they know she helps people, and people trust her."*
- **Collaboration with other services.** Relationships with partnering organizations facilitate referrals, improve public awareness of services, and create effective prevention activities. In one community, the Victim Service provider joined fire department community drills to promote Victim Services. Two communities spoke positively about their collaboration with Crown Witness Coordinators. One Victim Service provider noted that Crown providers are very cooperative in sharing information and facilitating requests for testimonial aids in court. In one community, Victim Service providers developed a sexual assault reporting protocol in consultation with the RCMP which detailed how Victim Services would be included when cases of sexual assault were reported directly to the RCMP.
- **Innovative public education approaches.** Recognizing the stigma and shame associated with the word "victim" and the barrier it creates for some victims and community members in taking part in educational activities, Victim Service providers created innovative ways to reach the public. For example, they took part in elders' dinners, women's spa nights, community barbeques, family events and other activities that would otherwise seem unrelated to Victim Services. They incorporated public education activities about victimization into these kinds of activities in more subtle ways. As one victim service provider explained, *"the aim is to bring people together to chat... it's better not to put a label on it that will prevent people from attending. You have to try keep it open."* In one community, the Victim Service provider promoted the Program to youth during basketball sessions and group discussion sessions. In another community, Victim Services attended the local science fair to set up a booth and used the opportunity to inform the community about the role of Victim Services.
- **Location of the Program office and availability of private space.** Welcoming, unassuming and easily accessible space helps individuals drop by and access help without fear that they will be seen by others as accessing Victim Services. In one community, the sponsoring organization has provided a separate location in the centre of the town. The space is informal and accessible (i.e. it is a single-story building with a ramp). This provided an extra level of

comfort and privacy in delivering the service. As one client from the community indicated, this location was seen by people in the town as a place of healing. There were a number of additional amenities on site that could be useful to clients. For example, the Victim Service provider mentioned how there were toys for children, food, snacks, a shower, and even laundry facilities.

### 3.4.2 Best Practices Implemented in Other Jurisdictions

A more detailed description of best practices related to different program areas based on a literature review, including references and suggestions provided by key informants during the interviews, is provided in Appendix 5. A summary of the best practices and approaches from other jurisdictions is presented below.

- **Implementation of more than one delivery model.** Most jurisdictions reviewed implement a combination of different models in delivering victims services to increase access to supports for victims (e.g. use of police-based and community-based models, specialized services for family violence victims, use of volunteers, use of a centralized service for information and referrals). British Columbia (BC) delivers Victim Services using two models: one is police-based help for victims of crime and trauma, and the other is community based for victims of family and sexual violence. In Yukon, community Victim Services volunteers become auxiliary RCMP constables to increase the availability of services to victims. Their status also allows volunteers access to files and ongoing police investigations, as well as immediate access to victims. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **An integrated service delivery model.** Many jurisdictions have developed integrated service delivery models. In New Zealand, Victim Services are offered by 'Community Link' centres based on a multiservice approach. Centres house a range of agencies to provide intensive wrap-around support for individuals and families who have multiple and complex needs: "At a Community Link, clients only need to tell their story once, not every time." The services and agencies are not only integrated at the administrative level of their programming, but also physically located under one roof. In Saskatchewan, Hub Tables are a risk-driven, collaborative intervention, administered by the Ministry of Corrections and Policing. Individual Community Hub Tables regularly convene local human service providers to discuss immediate, coordinated and integrated responses through mobilization of a wide range of interagency resources, in order to address situations of acutely elevated risk. Other jurisdictions implemented a comprehensive continuum of victim-centered services. These services are perceived to be "increasingly adept at therapeutic intervention, service delivery, case management and inter-agency cooperation."
- **Focus on prevention and ongoing public education.** One of the best practices identified in the literature was creating high public awareness of the services available as a result of "ongoing information campaigns and consistent services over many years." Literature suggests that effective prevention strategies have a significant impact on reducing crime, particularly repeat victimization. Appropriately tailored situational crime prevention tactics appear to be most effective in preventing repeat victimization.<sup>69</sup> Other studies make the case

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<sup>69</sup> Grove, E., Farrell, G., Farrington, D.P., & Johnson, S.D. (2012) Preventing Repeat Victimization: A systematic review. Stockholm, Sweden: National Council for Crime Prevention.

for primary prevention strategies that address the root causes of crime and promote strategic investments in children and families (e.g. school-based initiatives that promote health relationships, conflict resolution, etc.; and media campaigns directed at the population<sup>70</sup>). Increasing women's empowerment through education was also identified in literature as a crucial aspect of increasing their access to justice.<sup>71</sup>

- **Use of technology to support service delivery in the remote communities.** Some studies recommend the use of technology tools such as Skype to better connect women living in rural and remote areas to justice-related services, such as those providing legal advice. Because technology literacy may be low in rural areas, programs that use technology should involve community advocates to provide assistance and the tools should feature a user-friendly design. Technology can also be used in rural community centers to create 'one-stop shops' where electronic assistance or other supports could be provided.<sup>72</sup> Teleconferencing has been used in some jurisdictions to provide educational and training sessions and emotional support and to link victims to health professionals and other services.
- **Evidence-based decision-making.** Evidence-based decision making is a disciplined approach to using data, research and input from the communities when making decisions about programming and service design and delivery. Reliable data and input from Victim Service providers can give decision-makers valuable perspectives into the needs and priorities of the communities.<sup>73</sup> Information collection, sharing and collaboration with other partners and justice policymakers, and evaluations of initiatives are seen as important factors contributing to effectiveness of service design.
- **Professionalization of service.** Although both volunteer and professional models of victim support services can be found in Canada, many jurisdictions have moved towards a fully professional model. Review of the victim services in Australia recommended that a national competency standard for those engaged in victim support work be developed, and certification and accreditation procedures established.<sup>74</sup> The importance of victim service professionalization, including development of training and standards, was highlighted in the study completed by Department of Justice Canada, which noted that "the professionalization of victim services will mean the work (and practitioner) is legitimized and recognized as an integral component of first responder, criminal justice, and community response

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[https://www.bra.se/download/18.1ff479c3135e8540b29800015728/2012\\_Preventing\\_repeat\\_victimization2.pdf](https://www.bra.se/download/18.1ff479c3135e8540b29800015728/2012_Preventing_repeat_victimization2.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> Rossiter, K.R. (2011). Domestic Violence Prevention and Reduction in British Columbia (2000-2010). New Westminster, B.C: Centre for Prevention and Reduction of Violence

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networks/systems. It will encourage the development of a 'common language,' communicate expectations, and set standards for service all of which will improve responses and will result in victims of crime and trauma, their families, and their communities receiving high quality services that are coordinated and comprehensive."<sup>75</sup>

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## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Major Conclusions

The major conclusions arising from the evaluation findings are as follows.

#### *Responsiveness of the Program*

- **There is a strong need for Victim Services given the continuing high rates of reported and under-reported crime in NWT, including assaults and sexual assaults. Indigenous women suffering from family violence remain the largest client group served by the Program.**

Intimate partner violence is the most common form of family violence, and women are 4.5 times more likely to be the victims. Clients served by the Program are reflective of police-reported crime: nearly two-thirds of clients are victims of assaults and sexual assaults, over 80% of new clients served by the Program are female, and between 74% and 88% of clients served over the past four years are Indigenous. An average of two-thirds of new clients are referred by RCMP and Crown and are usually associated with reported crimes.

There is also a need for Victim Services related to under-reported crimes. Factors such as shame, stigma, isolation, socio-economic factors and negative impacts of colonization continue to contribute to high levels of under-reported family violence crimes. Most communities serve more 'continuing cases' than new clients annually, many of whom are believed to be victims of repeat offenders and under-reported crimes.

- **The Program is responsive to the needs of victims, particularly with respect to information, referrals and safety concerns. However, several factors can make it difficult to reach all victims with services where and when needed.**

Victim Services providers regularly provide information, referrals, and emotional support and help victims to access the VCEF. Emotional support is a very important aspect of the Program, which Victim Service providers are uniquely positioned to provide. However, several factors can constrain the ability of providers to provide that support where and when needed, including a lack of funding for travel (which limits the ability of providers to build trust and develop personal relationships with clients and service providers in outreach communities) and challenges in reaching victims when they are most vulnerable (e.g. Victim Service providers rarely accompany RCMP officers to the crime scene to provide support at the time when victims are most vulnerable). It was also suggested that, because of low awareness and limited marketing, the VCEF tends to be accessed only by those who are 'in the know.'

#### *Achievement of Outcomes*

- **The Program has been effective in providing information and other support that can help victims prepare to participate in the court process. However, other factors continue to constrain the willingness of many victims to participate in the justice system.**





The Program, in association with other resources, is able to provide the information and support needed by victims who are willing to participate in the mainstream justice system (at times, there is some duplication in that more than one resource may be providing information and assistance in court preparation to the same clients). However, even with the support of the Victim Services providers, victims often choose not to participate because of fear of the offender, uncertainty, mistrust in the system, financial loss, shame and stigma, lack of transportation and child-care, and the long court processes. Similar issues, including absence of programs in some communities and the seriousness of crimes, contribute to low levels of victim participation in the Restorative Justice System.

- **Victim Service providers help link clients to available services. In some communities, interagency meetings have been useful in facilitating greater collaboration across a fragmented system of supports.**

Clients are most often referred to legal and advocacy services, counselling and traditional wellness programs, shelters and family violence programs. In smaller communities, a major challenge is the lack of services, particularly access to shelters and long-term counselling programs. In larger communities, there are more services but issues such as the degree of fragmentation and high levels of staff turnover can make it difficult to create linkages and ensure that victims, particularly those with multiple needs, are served well. Interagency groups meet regularly in some communities and have resulted in sharing of ideas and new initiatives; however, there is need for more formalized collaboration with clear objectives.

- **The Program contributes to victim safety by providing financial resources for emergencies, helping to create safety plans, and providing other needed support.**

Victim Service providers often go 'above and beyond' to help victims who are fearful for their safety. In some communities, that may involve Victim Service providers assisting with transportation in the middle of the night or opening their homes for victims in emergency situations. The safety concerns were raised about women who are revictimized, and those not able or willing to leave their homes or communities. VCEF has provided assistance to over 300 victims over five years to cover various expenses such as home repair, ID replacement, emergency food and clothing, and emergency phones and minutes.

- **Territorial and community-level activities have increased the profile of the Program and public awareness of victimization. There is little strategic focus on prevention.**

Some community stakeholders have a limited understanding of the Program. However, most stakeholders, particularly RCMP officers and others involved in justice system, are familiar and appreciate the services provided. Limited availability of resources at the community level (there is largely one FTE Victim Service provider per community) have contributed to somewhat inconsistent and sporadic public engagement activities and lack of focus on prevention.

- **While little support is provided by the sponsoring organizations, training provided by the GNWT has increased the ability of providers to meet the needs of victims.**

Little formalized, in-house training and structural support is provided by sponsoring organizations. Given high turnover rates in some organizations, the lack of structure is

negatively impacting organizational memory and raises concerns regarding the sustainability of services. Very few Victim Service providers reported using the new fund for self-care and some reported challenges in taking time-off for self-care.

### *Design and Delivery*

- **The community-based model is perceived as appropriate for the NWT. However, some issues associated with the design of the Program were viewed as impacting access to, and the quality of, services.**

Concerns related to design of the services included issues around confidentiality and community dynamics in small communities, dependence on RCMP referrals, delayed first point of contact with Victim Services, fragmentation of services, level of staff turnover, and sponsoring organization sustainability and leadership. A lack of time and resources for travelling to outreach communities constrains access to services.

While it is important to build some flexibility into the Program design to better enable it to respond to community needs and characteristics, there are concerns that this flexibility has resulted in Program delivery shifting away from some of the original objectives and expectations that were established for the VSP.

- **There is confusion about the mandate and eligibility requirements of the VCEF.**

Although the VCEF is administered in a timely manner, there is some confusion regarding the guidelines which has resulted in inconsistencies in how the funds are used.

- **Most of the funding provided to communities is used for staff wages and benefits and as such goes directly to program delivery. The level of funding is low related to the significant costs of crime to victims and society.**

The level of funding provided for Victim Services limited the ability of the Program to contribute to preventative initiatives and adopt a more integrated case management approach to helping the most vulnerable clients (e.g. those in outreach communities, isolated, revictimized clients, and those with multiple barriers).

## 4.2 Major Recommendations

The following recommendations arising from the evaluation are divided into two levels. The first set of recommendations are for the GNWT, reflecting its roles and responsibilities. The second set are community-level recommendations that are better suited for the sponsoring organizations.

The GNWT should consider the following:

1. **Introduce police-based Victim Services in communities where sponsoring organizations are unable to provide stable, ongoing service.** In collaboration with RCMP, the GNWT should recruit a Victim Service provider to be located within the RCMP detachment and employed directly by the GNWT. This will ensure that services are available and accessible in these communities. It will also provide an opportunity for the Program to gain additional insights which can help facilitate better linkages between the Victim Service

providers and RCMP officers in all communities (e.g. insights regarding cases or calls where Victim Service providers should accompany officers, opportunities to improve information sharing, strategies for following up on victims who do not access services, etc.).

**2. Restructure the VCEF to clarify its mandate and requirements and improve access.** The following issues should be taken into consideration in restructuring the VCEF:

- The mandate of the fund, including its title, should be revised to include victims of trauma as well as victims of serious crime.
- Eligibility criteria should be revised to clarify that, in certain cases (e.g. victims of family violence and abuse requesting emergency food, clothing and mobile phone minutes), victims do not have to have reported the incident to the police and the crime does not have to have occurred within the last two months.
- Limitations should be imposed on the number of times a request for certain items (e.g. phone minutes) can be accessed without reporting the crime to police. Once the limitation is reached, the requests must first be approved at the GNWT management level before funding can be provided.
- Consideration should be given to establishing two streams of funding:
  - Under the Community stream, approval of funding below a designated threshold (e.g. more than half of the requests in the 2019/20 were below \$300) should be delegated to Victim Service providers. Concurrent with this, Victim Service providers must be given clear directions regarding eligibility and the reporting requirements on funds issued. In cases where there is a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest, or the request exceeds established limitations, Victim Service providers would be required to send the requests to the Program Manager for approval.
  - GNWT stream funding should be created to retain managerial decision-making for larger requests and to allow for discretionary approval of funds in special circumstances such as for victims of trauma or extraordinary events (e.g. victims of house fires, counselling, support for children witnessing traumatic event, loss of earnings, etc.)

**3. Introduce additional requirements to be met by sponsoring organizations with respect to providing training and ensuring the well-being of Victim Service providers.** The GNWT should amend the standard Contribution Agreements to require all future sponsoring organizations delivering the Program to:

- Create a contingency plan regarding the continuity of services when Victim Service providers are temporarily unavailable due to training requirements or taking time for self-care.
- Require that Victim Service providers create an annual self-care plan and be strongly encouraged (if not required) by sponsoring organizations to take time off for self-care.
- Require that Victim Service providers participate in an annual training delivered by GNWT.

- Develop a Victim Service Provider Safety and Wellbeing policy to which sponsoring organizations must adhere. The contractual agreement should include a provision regarding workplace disputes and a harassment-free workplace. Failure on the part of the sponsoring organization to provide a safe working environment could result in rescinding the contractual agreement. The GNWT should take responsibility to investigate any complaints regarding work safety and the well-being of Victim Service providers.
- 4. Create a more effective reporting and monitoring strategy.** The GNWT should improve its oversight responsibility by creating more structured and reliable reporting systems. Current reporting requirements are extensive. However, the data collected is inconsistent and somewhat unreliable. To address this, the GNWT should consider strengthening its reporting and monitoring strategy as follows:
- Introduce a case management approach to data collection and reporting which focuses on unique clients and their needs, rather than the services provided. The data on services provided (referrals, information, supports) should continue to be collected; however, it should be client specific. Information on whether crimes have been reported should be collected. This will facilitate better understanding of new clients vs. returning clients, re-victimization levels, type of services and supports needed by each new and returning client, and the level and intensity of demand. It will also provide more useful information to sponsoring organizations for priority setting.
  - Clearly define reporting categories. For example, new clients vs. continuous clients should be clearly defined so that all Victim Service providers record the same information. The reporting systems should allow Victim Service providers to quickly confirm, in their database, if and when a client previously received the service. Services that are recorded should be linked to a client rather than simply counted. VCEF funding categories, limitations and requirements should also be clearly defined in the reporting structure.
  - Adjust annual narrative reporting to focus on public education and training, including related innovative approaches, best practices identified, and challenges experienced.
  - Conduct occasional and random audits of the information to ensure that confidentiality is protected, and information is reliable.
  - A master logic model should be created to reflect all government activities targeted at victims. This exercise will help create a better understanding of the various programs and activities, their limitations and potential duplications.
- 5. Allocate additional resources for travel to outreach communities.** Additional resources should be allocated to allow Victim Service providers to travel to outreach communities more often. These resources should be allocated and managed by the Community Justice and Policing Division so that other resources can be more easily leveraged (e.g. RCMP or court travel budgets).

The sponsoring organizations should consider the following:



- 1. Create in-house onboarding processes and internal protocols.** Given the level of staff turnover, onboarding processes and internal protocols about community resources and best practices are needed to help sponsoring organizations improve the sustainability and consistency of services while training new staff. It will also ensure that information about best practices and good approaches are gathered, shared and easily accessible to new staff.
- 2. Introduce referral protocols and information sharing agreements to improve integration of services.** When used consistently, interagency meetings are an effective tool to learn about the resources and strategies each organization is implementing to address community issues and concerns. However, without information sharing protocols and clear directives on how different services can work together, it is very difficult to create an effective approach to help those who are the most vulnerable. A more strategic and collaborative approach is necessary to assess risks and create wrap-around supports to help those with multiple and complex needs.
- 3. Create a more strategic approach to public education and preventative measures.** With support from the Program management, sponsoring organizations should work on creating more strategic and comprehensive public education and crime prevention strategies. Public education should be an ongoing process implemented in collaboration with other community agencies and as part of interagency efforts. As part of this process, community organizations should consider re-branding the public education and community initiatives to reduce the stigma associated with the word 'victim.' Community members' levels of participation and their reception of the educational materials and information may depend on the choice of labels and words used in these materials. Public education and awareness initiatives should also focus on more vulnerable groups who may be less likely to access community services (e.g. elders, youth, immigrants), while prevention initiatives should focus on youth (e.g. school-based initiatives) and increasing women empowerment.

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## Appendix 1: List of Literature Reviewed

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## Appendix 2: Description of the Sponsoring Organizations

Community	Description of the Organization
Yellowknife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Native Women's Association of the NWT is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1978. Its mission is to provide training and education programs for all native women in the NWT. It is governed by a board consisting of 7 regional directors, 1 elder, and 1 youth representative</li> <li>▪ It provides the Victim Services Program, poverty/homelessness and volunteer opportunities, Aboriginal skills and employment raining strategies</li> <li>▪ The only organization that uses volunteers for after-hours services for Victim Services.</li> <li>▪ Very high turnover, history of work-conflict</li> <li>▪ Centrally located but lacks disability access (no elevator to the second floor), lack of private area for interviewing</li> <li>▪ 3 FTEs Victim Service providers (one has been there for 18 years)</li> </ul>
Inuvik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Inuvik Justice Committee was started in May of 1992 and provides support for both offenders and victims dealing with criminal justice system. The purpose of the committee is to facilitate community-based restorative justice and to provide a voice for victims of crime. It is governed by a board.</li> <li>▪ Two Victim Service providers serve Inuvik and outreach communities in the Beaufort-Delta region</li> <li>▪ Both Victim Service providers are new (one has been there for 4 months, the other for a few weeks)</li> <li>▪ Little private space apart from separate offices for Victim Service providers</li> </ul>
Hay River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The K'at'l'odeeche First Nation, established in the 1970s, is the central governing body of the Reserve. It provides services including health and social services, education and training programs, a community justice program, a children's centre with parenting classes and family supports</li> <li>▪ The leadership consists of the Chief, the Sub-Chief, and five counsellors</li> <li>▪ Two victims service providers serve Hay River (town and reserve) and outreach communities in the South Slave region</li> <li>▪ The Victim Service provider (FTE) has been in the role for 5 years, while the outreach provider (part-time) has been in place for less than one year</li> <li>▪ There is little private space, the Victim Service providers share an office with one another</li> </ul>
Fort Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Fort Smith Victim Services program is delivered through the Fort Smith Métis Council. The Fort Smith Métis Council also oversees community programs such as the On the Land Wellness Program and the Community Justice Committee</li> <li>▪ There is one FTE Victim Service provider, who has been in the role for 12 years</li> <li>▪ The Victim Service provider serves the town of Fort Smith</li> <li>▪ Centrally located in a house located on the main street, which offers privacy and comfort. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Restorative Justice Coordinator also works out of this space.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Fort Simpson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Victim Services are delivered through the Liidlii Kue First Nation. In addition to Victim Services, the Liidlii Kue First Nation delivers programs for community justice, homelessness, and community wellness. Their leadership consists of a Chief, Sub-Chief, council members, and an executive director</li> <li>▪ The Victim Service provider works part-time on Victim Services and part-time as homelessness officer</li> <li>▪ The Victim Service provider serves Fort Simpson and the outlying communities of the Dehcho Region</li> </ul>

Community	Description of the Organization
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Victim Service provider has been in the position for 3 years but began work in the health and social services field in 1991</li> <li>▪ There is some limited private space, with the Victim Service provider having a separate office within the band office, at the very end of the corridor</li> </ul>
Tłı̨chǫ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tłı̨chǫ Government was established in 2005 when the Tłı̨chǫ Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement came into effect. The Tłı̨chǫ Government office in Behchokǫ, the largest of the the Tłı̨chǫ communities.</li> <li>▪ The executive council for Tłı̨chǫ is made up of the Grand Chief elected by Tłı̨chǫ citizens and a Chief from each of the four Tłı̨chǫ Community Governments. The lawmaking body for the Tłı̨chǫ government is the Assembly. The Tłı̨chǫ Assembly is made up of 13 members.</li> <li>▪ The Victim Services staff includes one full-time Victim Service provider who serves the communities of Behchokǫ, Gamètì, Wekweètì and Whatì</li> <li>▪ The Victim Service provider has been in the position for 8 years</li> </ul>
Tulita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Tulita Victim Services Program is delivered through the Tulita Dene Band Council</li> <li>▪ Tulita has one full-time Victim Service position that serves the community of Tulita and has previously shared service provision in the communities of Colville Lake, Délı̨nę and Norman Wells with the program in Fort Good Hope</li> <li>▪ The Victim Service provider role is current vacant in Tulita</li> </ul>
Fort Good Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The sponsoring organization for Fort Good Hope Victim Services Program is the K'asho Got'ine Charter Community. The office shares service provision for the communities of Colville Lake, Délı̨nę and Norman Wells with the program in Tulita</li> <li>▪ Between the FY 2015/16 and 2018/19, the program had one full-time Victim Service provider</li> <li>▪ At present, the role of Victim Service provider is vacant, and clients are being referred to other Victim Service providers</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3: Description of Various Delivery Models

There are many different types of victim services programs delivered across Canada. Delivery models can be system-based, community-based, police-based, court-based or more. These models are summarized below:<sup>76</sup>

- **Police-based model:** Victim services are offered by a federal, provincial or municipal police service and are usually provided after a victim's first contact with the police. The police model can be delivered via a unit model, a dedicated officer model, or a referral model.<sup>77</sup> Victim services that are attached to law enforcement, such as police-based services, increase the likelihood that a victim will have access to information and services, as law enforcement agents are in a unique position to inform victims of the supports and information available to them. In the "unit" delivery model, police officers or civilian staff provide services through a dedicated unit that operates separate from general law enforcement operations. In the "dedicated officer" model, a liaison officer is charged with providing victim services, usually to specialized populations such as youth or members of the LGTBQ community. Finally, in the referral model, front-line police officers provide information and referrals to external victim services organizations.
- **Court-based model:** These programs are specifically mandated to provide support to those who are involved in the court process, whether they are victims or witnesses. Their purpose is to make the court process less intimidating. Court-based victim services focus on preparing victims and witnesses to participate in the court process. Court-based services' main advantage is that they make victims' and witnesses' contact with the courts less intimidating. However, victims only have access to these services if the police identify and arrest a suspect.<sup>78</sup>
- **Community-based model:** Community-based non-profits provide direct services to victims of crime. These organizations receive funding either in whole or in part from the provincial and/or federal government responsible for criminal justice. Community-based victim services are usually specialized and tailored to meet the needs of individual communities. Victims also may be more comfortable with accessing services at these organizations as they are perceived to be separate from the justice system. However, they rely on oneself or other agencies' referrals to provide services and inconsistencies in funding and training levels of staff may also impact the effectiveness of services.

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<sup>76</sup> Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. Types of Victim Services. <https://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/serv/tvs-tsv.html>. Retrieved March 5, 2020.

<sup>77</sup> Wilson, Dean & Segrave, Marie. (2011). Police-based victim services: Australian and international models. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*. 34. 479-496. 10.1108/13639511111157528

<sup>78</sup> Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. (1998). *Balancing the Scales: The State of Victims' Rights in Canada*. [https://crcvc.ca/docs/Balancing%20the%20Scales\\_98.pdf](https://crcvc.ca/docs/Balancing%20the%20Scales_98.pdf). Retrieved March 12, 2020.



- **System-based model:** A model of service delivery that is independent from police, courts and crown attorneys. These agencies service clients throughout their dealings with the criminal justice system and are administered by the provincial or territorial government. The systems-based model offers services to victims throughout their involvement in the justice system. An advantage of this model is its “one-stop shop” design where victims receive services that both the police and courts would provide. However, services are limited to the duration of the criminal justice process and have been perceived by victims as designed to aid the criminal justice process (e.g. helping victims to fulfill a witness role) and less to meet the needs of the victims themselves.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Victim Services Models Used in Canada**

Model	Advantages	Disadvantages	Province/Territory <sup>79</sup>
Community-based <sup>80,81,82</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to adapt to unique needs of the community.</li> <li>• Certain victims are more comfortable accessing services through agencies that they perceive are separate from the justice system.</li> <li>• Victims need not have reported crime to receive services.</li> <li>• Victims decide when services start and end.</li> <li>• Supports extend beyond the criminal justice system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rely on self-referrals or referrals from other agencies</b> (e.g. police)</li> <li>• <b>Inconsistencies in professional training requirements of victim services staff</b> (e.g. reliance on volunteer staff)</li> <li>• <b>Less access to training and professionalization opportunities for victim services staff</b></li> </ul>	<p>Nunavut</p> <p>Quebec</p> <p>Northwest Territories</p>
Police-based <sup>83,84</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can positively impact organizational culture to become more victim centred.</li> <li>• Increases likelihood of victim having access to information or services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Police culture:</b> prevalence of “crime-fighting law enforcement” paradigm means VS often seen as distraction from “real” police work.</li> <li>• <b>Police-civilian relations within police agencies:</b> Dismissive attitudes among sworn officers towards</li> </ul>	<p>Alberta</p> <p>Saskatchewan</p> <p>British Columbia</p>

<sup>79</sup> Statistics Canada. (2014). Table 2: Types of Victim Service Providers, by Province and Territory, 2011/2012. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/11899/tbl/tbl02-eng.htm>. Retrieved March 5, 2020.

<sup>80</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Closing Submissions of the Government of the Northwest Territories

<sup>81</sup> University of New Brunswick. Canadian Observatory on the Justice System’s Response to Intimate Partner Violence. (2016). National Framework for Collaborative Police Action on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

<sup>82</sup> Wemmers, Jo-Anne M. (2017). Victimology: A Canadian Perspective. University of Toronto Press.

<sup>83</sup> Wilson, Dean & Segrave, Marie. (2011). Police-based victim services: Australian and international models. Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management. 34. 479-496. 10.1108/13639511111157528.

<sup>84</sup> Waller, Irvin. (2011). Rights for Victims of Crime: Rebalancing Justice. Rowman & Littlefield. United Kingdom.



Model	Advantages	Disadvantages	Province/Territory <sup>79</sup>
		civilian staff; not seen as equals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>VS unit is resource intensive</b>, and not necessarily seen as priority for directing those resources.</li> <li>• <b>Contingent on jurisdictional policing structure</b> (e.g. are officers frequently rotated and therefore constrained in building links to external agencies)</li> </ul>	Nova Scotia
System-based <sup>85,86</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-stop shop model of services.</li> <li>• Trained, professional staff (as opposed to volunteer staff).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Services are limited to the duration of the victim's contact with the criminal justice system</b></li> <li>• <b>Extent of support staff can provide has been perceived to be limited or restricted</b> (e.g. main goal is to aid the criminal justice process, not the victim)</li> </ul>	Newfoundland and Labrador Yukon Manitoba New Brunswick Prince Edward Island Nova Scotia
Court-based <sup>87</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares victims and witnesses to participate in the court process.</li> <li>• Helps to make the court process less intimidating through orientation, preparation and accompaniment to court.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limited to victims going through the court process</b> (i.e. the police have identified and arrested a suspect)</li> </ul>	Northwest Territories  Ontario  Yukon

<sup>85</sup> Victim Support Services. (2013). System-Based and Community Based Advocacy—The Need for Both. <https://victimssupportservices.org/system-based-and-community-based-advocacy-the-need-for-both/> Retrieved March 6, 2020.

<sup>86</sup> Kenney, J. Scott. (2010). Canadian Victims of Crime: Critical Insights. Canadian Scholars' Press. Toronto.

<sup>87</sup> Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. (1998). Balancing the Scales: The State of Victims' Rights in Canada. [https://crcvc.ca/docs/Balancing%20the%20Scales\\_98.pdf](https://crcvc.ca/docs/Balancing%20the%20Scales_98.pdf). Retrieved March 12, 2020.

## Appendix 4: Review of Programs in Selected Jurisdictions

Description of Victim Service Programming
<p><b>British Columbia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All victim service programs provide criminal justice information and support, safety planning, practical and emotional support and information referrals.</li> <li>▪ In BC, victim services are delivered using two models:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Police-based help for victims of crime and trauma (more than 90 police-based victim services programs are located in RCMP detachments and municipal police departments throughout BC). Police-based victim services programs respond to police call-outs and provide critical incident response to victims and their family members in the immediate aftermath of crime or trauma.</li> <li>○ Community-based help for victims of family and sexual violence (60 community-based programs are located throughout the province).</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There are many programs and resources available to victims of crime, particularly women and children impacted by violence: Stopping the Violence Counselling programs; PEACE (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment) programs that provide group and individual counselling for children ages 3 to 28; outreach services programs provide women with supportive counselling, referrals and transportation; multicultural outreach services; and court support programs.</li> <li>▪ VictimLinkBC is a toll-free, confidential telephone service available across BC and Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.</li> <li>▪ The Ending Violence Association of BC provides referrals, support and information to help connect victims and programs with the appropriate services.</li> <li>▪ Support for those working in the field: Police Victim Services of British Columbia (PVSBC) provides leadership, support, advocacy and training to professionals working in the field of victim services. Their vision is that all victims of crime and trauma across BC receive compassionate, professional and consistent services. One of their priorities is to advocate for police-based victims services in BC which includes advocating for sector priorities, implementing a comprehensive communications and awareness initiative and convene a BC police-based victim services sector partner and stakeholder table. They work on re-branding and key messaging for victim services.</li> <li>▪ <b>The Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP)</b> assists victims, immediate family members and some witnesses by providing financial benefits to help offset financial losses and assist in recovery. The eligible expenses include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Benefits for victims of crime include medical and dental services, prescription drug expenses, counselling, protective measures, replacement of damaged or destroyed eyeglasses, clothing and disability aids, childcare and homemaker services, disability aids and related disability expenses or services, support for a child born because of a crime, vocational services, income support or lost earning capacity, transportation and related expenses, and crime scene cleaning.</li> <li>○ Benefits for immediate family members include counselling, prescription drugs, transportation, crime scene cleaning, and travel costs for the family of a deceased victim.</li> <li>○ In cases involving fatalities, benefits also include funeral expenses, bereavement leave, other benefits to support spouses, children and financially dependent family members.</li> <li>○ Benefits for witnesses include counselling, prescription drugs, transportation to attend counselling, and crime scene cleaning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Alberta</b></p>



### Description of Victim Service Programming

- Alberta Victim Services can provide help, financial assistance and restitution for victims of crime, as well as grants and training for victim service providers.
- In Alberta, victim services are provided by police-based programs as well as community-based programs, such as sexual assault centres, domestic violence programs, or programs to assist families of homicide victims.
  - There are victim services units in communities across Alberta. Victim services units are staffed with trained professionals who help victims throughout the criminal justice process.
  - Community-based victim services programs are typically special programs to help victims of specific types of crime, e.g. family violence or sexual assault.
  - Victim service units can inform victims, e.g., about the following:
    - Victim impact statements – to tell the judge how the crime has affected them.
    - Financial benefit forms – to apply for money if there has been an injury.
    - Restitution – if the victim has lost money or property because of the crime.
- The Alberta Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General Victims Services provides support to these programs and grant funding from the Victims of Crime Fund. Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Victims Services also provides a financial benefits program for victims of crime.
- The local police or victim services unit can be contacted at any time. Other services available on a 24/7 basis include:
  - The Family Violence Helpline, a phone service where victims can talk about family violence with trained staff (there is also an online Family Violence Info Line Chat available between 12pm – 8pm daily);
  - The Child Abuse Hotline; and
  - Kids Help Phone.
- Victims of crime can get a monetary benefit to acknowledge victimization based on the injuries directly suffered from the crime.
  - Eligibility criteria include: being the victim of an eligible offence listed in the Victims of Crime Regulation, the crime having taken place in Alberta, reporting the crime to police within a reasonable period of time, co-operating with the investigation into the crime, and the application being received within 2 years of the date of the crime.

### Yukon

- The Victim Services Unit in Yukon's Department of Justice offers a system-based model of victim services.
- Yukon Victim Services works closely with the Crown attorney's office and the RCMP to offer support to victims from the time of the offence through to conclusion of sentence, treatment and release.
- Yukon Victim Services provides crisis support; helps victims understand their options; shares information about the court process; informs victims about their rights; provides support and information for victims throughout the criminal justice process; helps victims develop a safety plan, apply for protective court orders and prepare Victim Impact Statements and Community Impact Statements; helps victims get support from other agencies; and provides emergency practical support.
  - Yukon Victim Services works with all types of crime, including, e.g., victims of domestic and sexual assault, criminal harassment (stalking), physical violence & threats, property crimes & theft, and impaired driving.
  - Services can be accessed in person, over the phone, or by email. Services can also be procured anonymously and Victim Services will not ask for identification, immigration status, or other documents.
- The Yukon Government also provides public education, prevention activities and support to community agencies, through the Department of Justice, the Women's Directorate and other departments.

### Description of Victim Service Programming

- Given the geographic challenges of providing services in the territory, most communities do not have permanent local victim services staff. In these communities, victims generally receive support from the Victim Services Program, during every court circuit, by telephone or by referral to local services.
- Yukon Victim Services can be accessed by victims of a crime, witnesses of a crime, friends and family members of a victim, and service providers who support people affected by crime.
- Those in Yukon can also access VictimLinkBC, a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available across B.C. and the Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week that provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking exploited for labour or sexual services.
- The Victim of Crimes Emergency Fund can provide immediate emergency financial assistance to victims of crime as a fund of last resort, designed for victims unable to procure help from other sources like Social Assistance, First Nations, insurance, a shelter or community group.
  - Eligible persons may be able to get funding for short-term counselling, crime scene clean-up, emergency home repair for immediate safety, emergency accommodation, emergency childcare and dependency support, certain transportation costs, medical expenses, and other items considered to be emergencies.
- Specialized programs are available to specific types of victims including domestic violence victims, child and youth victims and family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
  - For example, through Project Lynx, Victim Services can provide supports for children and youth (voluntary and confidential) when they have experienced a crime, with or without a criminal charge. Victim Service Providers are available to help guide the child or youth and their caregivers through the justice system and from any point in the process.

### Ontario

- Ontario Victim Services provides direct services to victims of crime across Ontario and funds community organizations that deliver support services. It provides leadership for victims of crime in policy development, program design, and frontline service delivery.
- A wide range of programs are available for victims in Ontario. The Ministry of the Attorney General's Ontario Victim Services, part of the Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division, funds and provides services to victims/survivors of crime through community-based agencies and directly administers several programs.
  - Community-based agencies administer programs including:
    - The Victim Quick Response Program +, which provides eligible victims with emergency funds for certain expenses immediately following a violent crime.
    - Sexual Assault Centres. Female victims and survivors of sexual assault who are 16 years of age or older are eligible for a variety of counselling, information and referral services from these centres.
    - The Victim Support Line, a province-wide, bilingual, toll-free information line that provides information about a range of services for victims of crime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
    - Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario (VCAO), which provides a range of services to assist victims of crime. These services are delivered locally by not-for-profit community agencies which operate under different names. Services offered include: 24/7 assistance and support, crisis intervention, addressing immediate safety concerns, emergency financial assistance, safety planning, provision of information, and referrals to counselling and relevant community and government support services.
  - Ontario Victim Services directly administers, e.g., the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP), which provides information, assistance and support to victims and witnesses of crime to increase their understanding of, and participation in, the criminal court

### Description of Victim Service Programming

process.

- These programs give direct support to victims and their families and may provide specialized services to specific populations such as victims/survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse, hate crime, elder abuse and families of homicide victims, as well as victims with disabilities, francophone victims and their families and Indigenous victims and their families.
- In Ontario, there is also an independent Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), which is an advisory agency that provides advice to the Attorney General on victims' issues. To do so, the OVC engages and consults with a range of stakeholders including government, community groups, academics, and victims of crime themselves.

### New Zealand

- In New Zealand, programs and services are provided by community-based service providers and/or government agencies. A wide variety of organizations in the country provide counselling, language interpretation, support for victims of family violence, support for victims of sexual violence, assistance to family members of homicide victims, services for children, services for the Indigenous Maori population, services for older persons, assistance for those with disabilities, and services for migrants and refugees.
- The leading victim services organization in New Zealand is **Victim Support**, which provides free 24-hour emotional support, personal advocacy and information to all people affected by crime and trauma throughout the country. The organization also advocates for the rights and interests of these victims.
  - Services provided by New Zealand's Victim Support include:
    - Emotional first aid and practical support at the time of crisis
    - Financial grants to reimburse costs after some serious crimes, especially homicide, death by a criminal act, and sexual violence
    - referral to counselling and other services, and payment of counselling costs in some cases for serious crime
    - Help dealing with the criminal justice system e.g. attending court, restorative justice, parole board; preparing victim impact statements, and help organizing travel and accommodation if required
    - Help dealing with grief, loss, trauma and shock
    - Follow up on well-being/safety after crisis and further emotional and practical support if required
    - Specialist support following a homicide
    - Help and support through the coronial process
    - Advocacy with other organizations
  - Services are available throughout New Zealand through a national/regional structure. Direct service delivery to victims is primarily delivered by volunteer Support Providers who are managed and supervised by paid staff coordinators. Staff also provide debriefing, supervision, case management, coaching and regular training to the volunteer Support Providers.
  - A 24-hour telephone contact service manages victim referrals and improves volunteer Support Provider safety throughout New Zealand. The service also provides front line police and the New Zealand Police communications dispatch team with a responsive way of identifying and directing our volunteer Support Providers to any location no matter what the time of day or night.
- People in New Zealand can also get legal assistance, support at court from a court victim advisor and referrals to safety services if they have been victims of family violence.

### Australia

- The structure of victim services in Australia has developed primarily as a state response, rather than in a coordinated national manner. Much of this is due to the fact that crime and its control are considered to be matters for state governments rather than the federal government.

### Description of Victim Service Programming

Much of the provision of victim services, particularly in terms of victim support services, is still evolving. It is considered to be a diverse field. Examples of victim services in various Australian states and territories follow.

- **Northern Territory:** Due to the unique geographical challenges presented by a very small population spread over a large area, the Northern Territory has had to address the provision of services to regional/rural areas more rigorously than other States. The most common method of contact between victims and services in the Northern Territory is referral, both from other agencies and self-referral.
  - NT residents can access a 24-hour call-out service, phone help line, court support, advocacy, and clean-up and securing fund (financial assistance for unlawful entries).
  - The Crime Victims Services Unit can pay financial assistance to victims of crime who have suffered financial loss or injury as a result of a violent act that occurred in the Northern Territory.
  - The National Redress Scheme provides acknowledgement and support to people who have experienced child sexual abuse.
- **New South Wales:** Victims Services is a government agency, part of the NSW Department of Justice. It provides the Victim Access Line, the first point of entry for victims of crime in NSW; counselling; financial support; and counselling and support to families and friends of missing people.
- **Victoria:** The Victorian Government's Victims of Crime Helpline offers information, advice and support. Contacting the helpline is the first step to get free services to help victims manage the effects of crime.
  - The helpline provides:
    - advice about reporting a crime
    - information about the legal process, including after the offender is in jail
    - help applying for compensation and financial assistance
    - connections to other support services, such as the Victims Assistance Program.
  - The helpline can organize a support provider to help victims with day-to-day needs; emergency home security; managing personal safety; communicating with police and making a report; organizing counselling, transport, and medical services; getting ready for court; preparing a Victim Impact Statement; applying for financial assistance; and getting information about the offender.
- **Queensland:** Victim Assist Queensland provides information and advice for victims of crime including information about support services, victims' rights and financial assistance.
  - Victim Assist Queensland focuses on victim recovery by paying for or reimbursing the costs of goods and services that a victim requires to help them recover from the physical and psychological effects of a crime. Victim Assist Queensland aims to provide a tailored, needs-based response, focusing on financial assistance and support for victims rather than just criminal compensation.
- **Western Australia:** The WA Victim Support Service provides free, confidential counselling and support services for all victims of crime. These services are provided by professional counsellors and trained volunteers.
  - Specifically, services available to victims of crime include:
    - Counselling and support
    - Providing information and referrals to other support services
    - Helping victims write a victim impact statement

### Description of Victim Service Programming

- Preparing and supporting victims during a court case
- Helping victims obtain information on the status of police investigations
- Providing support when making an application for a restraining order
- Providing information about criminal injuries compensation
- Helping victims understand their rights within the criminal justice system
- Providing information on the status of convicted offenders
- **South Australia:** Victim Support Service is South Australia's statewide service for victims of crime offering both therapeutic, emotional and practical support. Services include counselling, court support, compensation for victims of crime, victim impact statements, support for survivors of child sexual abuse, and information and other types of practical support.
- **Tasmania:** The Victims of Crime Service supports people to deal with personal and practical problems associated with the impact of crime, to allow them to regain control of their lives.
  - Services available include:
    - Personal support, counselling and information
    - Referral to appropriate community services and resources
    - Information regarding the criminal justice system
    - Support for people attending court
    - Assistance with Victim Impact Statements
    - Information and assistance with Victims of Crime Assistance applications
    - Information on custody, bail and parole processes
    - Advocacy for victims' rights

### Minnesota, USA

- In Minnesota, many different types of victim services are available, from state-wide government-run assistance and referral services to local police- and community-based victims services depending on county, community, etc.
- The statewide Minnesota Crime Victim Support Line is delivered by the Cornerstone organization to provide support to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, impaired drivers, elder abuse and exploitation, homicide and unexpected death, identity theft/fraud, theft/robbery/burglary, and gang-related crimes.
- The statewide Minnesota Day One Crisis Line operates 24/7 and is available to anyone who is experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence, or sex trafficking. It can provide:
  - Support: 24-hour crisis supportive services
  - Safety: Getting and keeping victims and their families safe
  - Housing: Providing emergency shelter and safe housing
  - Resources: Support groups, transitional housing, legal advocacy, culturally specific services and more
- Other statewide services are available though RapeHelpMn.org and United Way.
- Victim services throughout Minnesota may variously be provided by community organizations, attorney's offices, police departments, and American Indian (Indigenous) groups.
- Compensation for victims is administered by the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board, which provides financial help to victims and

<b>Description of Victim Service Programming</b>
<p>their families for losses incurred as a result of the crime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eligibility criteria include: the crime involving an injury or death (property crimes are not covered); the crime having occurred in Minnesota; the crime being reported to police within 30 days; the claim being filed within 3 years; the victim cooperating fully with police and prosecutor; the victim not having committed a crime through misconduct.</li> <li>○ Compensation can cover funeral and burial expenses, medical and dental bills, mental health counselling services, childcare and household services, loss of wages, crime scene cleanup, and financial support for dependents of a homicide victim.</li> </ul>
<b>New Mexico, USA</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As in Minnesota, the U.S. state of New Mexico provides services through a mix of government agencies, community organizations, and police-based service providers.</li> <li>• The New Mexico Attorney General’s Office hosts a Victim Services office, which seeks to provide comprehensive services in a competent, sensitive, and professional manner. To do so, it works with various partners across the state, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission</li> <li>○ New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs</li> <li>○ Albuquerque SANE</li> <li>○ New Mexico Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC)</li> <li>○ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)</li> <li>○ All Faiths</li> <li>○ Para Los Ninos</li> <li>○ New Mexico Kids Matter</li> <li>○ Assistance Dogs of the West</li> <li>○ New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence</li> <li>○ Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New Mexico’s District Attorneys also offer specialized services to victims. Every District Attorney’s office in the State of New Mexico has a District Attorney Victim-Witness specialist, or Advocate. The Victim Advocate provides crime victims with information about the court system, notification of court hearings and offender release. The advocate often assists with Crime Victims Reparation Commission applications, provides information to crime victims regarding case status, and may accompany a crime victim to court. They provide referrals to agencies and organizations that can also help the victim get through the ordeal of being a crime victim. They also provide the prosecutors with direct trial support services.</li> <li>• The New Mexico Corrections Department offers its own Victim Services Program, which serves as a direct point of contact for crime victims and their families who have concerns related to offenders who are in the custody or under the probation and/or parole supervision. Services include assistance to crime victims and their families during the parole board hearing process.</li> <li>• Examples of police-based victim service programs are those that exist at the New Mexico State University Police Department and through the Farmington, NM Police Department.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5: Summary of the Recommendations and Best Practices



The following table provides a summary of suggestions offered by interview respondents, and the summary of best practices found in literature, related to the specific program area.

Program Area	Suggestions/Best Practices
<p><b>Access</b></p>	<p><i>Suggestions provided by key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus on parts of NWT population who are less likely to use the service (e.g. outreach communities, immigrants etc.).</li> <li>▪ Provide services in places where clients in places they feel most safe (e.g. friend’s house, counsellor’s office, college).</li> <li>▪ Provide transportation or funding for transport.</li> <li>▪ Having victim service provider based in community being served (e.g. not relying on a provider in another community).</li> <li>▪ Broad scope of the program to include victims of tragedy as well as crime.</li> <li>▪ Accessible office space (e.g. provide a ramp or have a lift if two-story building).</li> <li>▪ Increase travel budget for victim service providers,</li> <li>▪ Increase use of texting and other apps (e.g. Facebook) to contact clients.</li> </ul> <p><i>Literature Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Use technology to improve access to victim services</b>, especially for victims living in rural and remote (R&amp;R) communities.<sup>88</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide a toll-free telephone number that victims can use to ask questions and navigate options in their communities.<sup>89</sup></li> <li>○ Enable justice processes to be completed online (e.g. e-protection orders, e-filing, and mobile specialized courts).</li> <li>○ Optimize online services for persons with low levels of technological literacy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Leverage existing programs</b> to provide information about Victim Services and safety planning.<sup>90</sup></li> <li>▪ <b>Promote equal access to services</b> by identifying personal biases and working to limit their effect, ensuring the services are welcoming and accessible.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use flexibility, innovation and persistence to promote fair access and the benefits of service.</li> <li>○ Value and promote justice and equity in delivery of services.</li> <li>○ Use initiative and ongoing commitment to ensure that the program and services are welcoming, available and extended to populations in need.</li> <li>○ Ensure accessibility at all service delivery sites.<sup>91</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>88</sup> Rural Health Information Hub. (2018). Violence and Abuse in Rural America. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/violence-and-abuse#identify>. Retrieved March 20, 2020.

<sup>89</sup> “Creating a Framework for the Wisdom of the Community: Review of Victim Services in Nunavut, Northwest and Yukon Territories.” [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr03\\_vic3/p00.html#yt](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr03_vic3/p00.html#yt) Retrieved March 18, 2020.

<sup>90</sup> Rural Health Information Hub.



Program Area	Suggestions/Best Practices
<p><b>Accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Provide 24/7 access</b> - Implement structures to ensure services are accessible to victims on a constant 24/7 basis.<sup>92</sup></li> </ul> <p><i>Suggestions provided by key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information – need for consistent and reliable program reporting.</li> <li>▪ More supervision or oversight of role to ensure duties are being carried out and to monitor where funding is used.</li> <li>▪ More standardization in terms of the types of providers that are hired and the quality of services across communities.</li> </ul> <p><i>Literature Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decision-making processes should be based on evidence and reliable information.</li> <li>▪ Ensure written policies are in place and structures to guard against personal interest, conflict of interest, work-conflict and discrimination, etc.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that there is a grievance process in place that can be accessed without bias by staff or volunteers.<sup>93</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Awareness</b></p>	<p><i>Suggestions provided by key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promotional material printed in languages other than English (e.g. Indigenous languages).</li> <li>▪ Use innovative approaches to promoting service and educating the public so as to encourage interest and participation.</li> <li>▪ Consistent awareness building throughout year – not sporadic or over-reliant on existing calendar events.</li> <li>▪ More proactive and preventative work that aims to reduce the cycle victimization.</li> <li>▪ Update printed materials that are circulated through communities (some existing materials described as “stale”).</li> </ul> <p><i>Literature Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deploy diverse and innovative awareness-building strategies to inform victims about available services. Consider paid advertising, distributing printed materials at community events, and making community presentations.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make informational materials available in Indigenous, immigrant, and minority languages.<sup>94</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Educate the community on crime victimization issues and promote awareness of available services and prevention efforts.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Utilize training tools based on best practices and most recent research.</li> <li>○ Educate the community to change the social norms that promote and/or contribute to crime and violence.</li> <li>○ Conduct primary prevention activities in the community.</li> <li>○ Provide information and education regarding personal and community safety planning.</li> <li>○ Regularly survey key community stakeholders for feedback on programming to use in program development and marketing strategies.<sup>95</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>91</sup> Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs. (2010). Best Practices Guidelines: Crime Victim Services.

<sup>92</sup> “Creating a Framework for the Wisdom of the Community.”

<sup>93</sup> Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs.

<sup>94</sup> U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. (2009). Victim Services in Rural Law Enforcement. [https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Victim\\_Services\\_in\\_Rural\\_Law\\_Enforcement.pdf](https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Victim_Services_in_Rural_Law_Enforcement.pdf). Retrieved March 20, 2020.

<sup>95</sup> Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs.





Program Area	Suggestions/Best Practices
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<p><i>Suggestions provided by key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refrain from leaving voice messages when trying to call clients.</li> <li>▪ The VSP should be situated in private office space.</li> <li>▪ Ensure client files are stored and filed safely.</li> <li>▪ Victim Service providers should meet clients away from the office, in a private place.</li> </ul> <p><i>Literature Review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clearly inform victims about data privacy, confidentiality policies and mandated reporting requirements as early as possible in the intake process.</li> <li>▪ Clearly define and follow confidentiality policies throughout the agency, among all staff and volunteers.</li> <li>▪ Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their professional responsibility, ethical obligations and legal requirements regarding confidentiality of client information and receipt of services.</li> <li>▪ Have in place a policy and protocol that is in compliance with legal requirements for data and record retention.</li> <li>▪ Develop a system for coding victims’ files that maintains anonymity.<sup>96</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Integrated Services</b>	<p><i>Suggestions provided by key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite other agencies (e.g. the RCMP) to events held by the sponsoring organization to help build relationships.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with other agencies and services to facilitate referrals, awareness of services, and public education of victimization.</li> <li>▪ Ensure ongoing dialogue and discussion with agency partners, not only when making referrals.</li> <li>▪ Provision of a “one-stop shop” for clients getting information and referrals for other services.</li> <li>▪ Establish interagency protocols for dealing with certain situations (e.g. sexual assault reporting; securing peace bonds).</li> <li>▪ Increase sharing of information among service providers.</li> </ul> <p><i>Literature Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop formal and informal collaboration with other crime victim and social service providers to coordinate efforts in meeting crime victims’ needs.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain a current list of community resources that provide victim-centred services.</li> <li>○ Develop ongoing relationships with culturally specific programs and resources to ensure access for victims.</li> <li>○ Strategize together to leverage existing and available resources.</li> <li>○ Establish and maintain a referral procedure in cooperation with other community agencies.</li> <li>○ Participate in multidisciplinary training.</li> <li>○ Participate in task forces, committees, and work groups to increase effectiveness in a victim-centred response.<sup>97</sup></li> <li>○ Encourage geographic proximity between different service providers, e.g. by basing various agencies in one location for</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>96</sup> Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs.

<sup>97</sup> Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs.



Program Area	Suggestions/Best Practices
	<p>easy access to victims.<sup>98</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Offer a single intake point where a victim can tell their story and subsequently be referred to appropriate services on the basis of specific needs.<sup>99</sup></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop an inter-agency framework for strategic planning and case management.<sup>100</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p><i>Suggestions provided by key informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More input and formal policies from sponsoring organizations to direct the role of victim service provider.</li> <li>▪ Continue to promote and deliver self-care training for all Victim Service providers.</li> <li>▪ Provide protective mechanisms for staff against lateral violence and workplace harassment in organizations.</li> <li>▪ Implement effective and safe administrative strategies for storing and locating client files.</li> </ul> <p><i>Literature Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement strategies to ensure organizational stability.</li> <li>▪ Leverage high-level leadership, management and administrative skills to ensure victim service agencies can serve as knowledgeable and credible voices for victims.</li> <li>▪ Create a positive, productive workplace environment that benefits both paid staff and volunteers and promotes high-quality services for victims.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support and promote a victim-centred workplace climate that encourages and develops staff leadership.</li> <li>○ Apply management and supervisory principles, theories and best practices to motivate staff, achieve organizational excellence and accomplish quality outcomes for victims.<sup>101</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Quality</b>	<p><i>Suggestions from Key Informants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure providers across community have the same, standardized level of training in order to support victims adequately.</li> <li>▪ Instill minimum training requirements for staff (e.g. a certain amount of hours).</li> <li>▪ Provide formalized onboarding processes for new providers.</li> <li>▪ Provide volunteers with formalized training given the challenging situations they face.</li> <li>▪ Continue to provide training on trauma-informed approaches to service delivery.</li> <li>▪ Further opportunities for Victim Service providers to learn from one another by exchanging knowledge and sharing experiences with one another.</li> </ul>

<sup>98</sup> Mossman, Elaine. (2012). Victims of crime in the adult criminal justice system: A stocktake of the literature. <http://www.victimsinfo.govt.nz/assets/Research/Victims-of-Crime-Lit-review-Final-edited.pdf#page67>. Retrieved March 19, 2020.

<sup>99</sup> Mossman.

<sup>100</sup> Cook, Bree, David, Fiona, and Grant, Anna. Australian Institute of Criminology. (1999). Victims’ Needs, Victims’ Rights - Policies and Programs for Victims of Crime in Australia. Australian Institute of Criminology Research and Public Policy Series No. 19.

<sup>101</sup> Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs.



Program Area	Suggestions/Best Practices
	<p><i>Literature Review:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote professionalization of Victim Services by privileging paid staff over volunteers.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where funding permits, it may be helpful to rely predominantly on paid professional service providers to provide services rather than volunteers.</li> <li>○ Implement innovative IT approaches to enhance the professional development and augment the network of justice professionals.<sup>102</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Ensure that staff and volunteers have the appropriate training to undertake their work and provide services to victims.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement a formal training program for both staff and volunteers.<sup>103</sup></li> <li>○ Provide ongoing training for staff to upgrade their skills.</li> <li>○ Ensure that volunteers receive appropriate training, e.g. related to counselling and crisis care.<sup>104</sup></li> <li>○ Training should also be available for others working in justice issues, like law enforcement – training for law enforcement can include information about the dynamics of crime victimization (e.g. in rural areas); the barriers victims face; and information about specific offenses like domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault.<sup>105</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>102</sup> ICCLR.

<sup>103</sup> Wemmers, Jo-Anne M. (2017). *Victimology: A Canadian Perspective*. University of Toronto Press.

<sup>104</sup> Bree, David, and Grant.

<sup>105</sup> U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs.