



30th Annual Report
2018-2019

Victims Assistance Committee of the
Northwest Territories

June 30, 2019

The Honourable Louis Sebert
Minister of Justice

Dear Minister Sebert:

Victims Assistance Committee Annual Report

On behalf of the Victims Assistance Committee, I am pleased to present the 30th Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, thereby meeting our legislative requirement as per section 10 (1) of the *NWT Victims of Crime Act*. I would like to thank you for your ongoing support of the Victims Assistance Committee over this last year.

The membership, funding recommendations, and Ministerial approvals for disbursements from the Victims' Assistance Fund for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, and resulting activities supported by the disbursements, are documented in this report.

The Victim Assistance Committee mandate is to ensure the best use of the Victims Assistance Fund to directly serve and benefit victims of crime as a whole, rather than individually in the NWT. It is not a compensation fund, nor a restitution fund. The funding is allocated to projects that include: training of members of the public, justice professionals and justice partners; public awareness of the needs and rights of victims under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR) enacted in July of 2015; and projects, programs and events that support the needs of victims.

Each year, the Victim Assistance Committee members, Gladys Macpherson of Fort Smith, Margaret Mercredi of Yellowknife, and myself as Chair, use this report as an opportunity to highlight some of the programs and services this funding supports across the Northwest Territories. We feel very honoured to be able to support these programs for many reasons.

This past year the Victims Assistance Fund provided funding through the Status of Women Council of the NWT to send out self-care kits to community organizations that assist women fleeing violence across the Territories. These kits contained simple personal hygiene necessities that provide individuals fleeing violence some comfort.

For the third year in a row, we provided funding to the Native Women's Association of the NWT for family members of victims of homicide to travel to attend court proceedings related to the loss of their loved ones. The Committee unanimously felt this is a very worthwhile program to support, and family members who have received this funding are always very grateful and express their sincere appreciation.

The Committee looks forward to your continued support in raising public awareness about the needs and rights of victims of crime, and to lessen the effects of crime on victims and their families in the Northwest Territories.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bridget Larocque". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail.

Bridget Larocque, Chairperson

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NWT Victims Assistance Committee – Legislation

NWT VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT – R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.9 (Supp.) in force April 1, 1989

The Northwest Territories (NWT) *Victims of Crime Act* establishes the Victims Assistance Fund (VAF) and provides for the appointment of a Victims Assistance Committee (VAC).

Definition of “victims” under the *Victims of Crime Act*:

“Victims” means persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including

- (a) physical or mental injury,
- (b) emotional suffering,
- (c) economic loss, or
- (d) substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws or laws that have penal consequences, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted, and includes persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization and, where appropriate, the immediate family or dependants of the direct victims.

Victims Assistance Fund

The Victims Assistance Fund (VAF) is a special-purpose fund established by subsection 11(1) of the NWT *Victims of Crime Act* with revenue from victim fine surcharges from territorial and federal courts. The VAF supports community-based projects and activities that support victims of crime including:

- Training to sensitize and inform community resource workers about the needs and circumstances of victims of crime;
- Direct services that assist victims through crisis response, personal support, follow-up assistance, information, and referrals;
- Public awareness and information on the rights and responsibilities of victims, available services, the criminal justice system and its procedures, and any other issues relating to victims of crime;
- Research into the needs and concerns of victims;
- Distribution of victim services information; and,

- Promotion of services for victims.

The VAF does not provide direct financial compensation to individual victims or their families, and does not consider funding proposals from private businesses. As this is a revolving fund based on victim of crime surcharges from the NWT and Federal Courts, the amounts vary and available funds are limited at times.

Victims Assistance Committee

The NWT *Victims of Crime Act* establishes the three-member advisory Victims Assistance Committee (VAC) appointed by the Minister of Justice and provides for three-year term appointments of Committee members (section 2(2)), as well as the designation of the Chairperson (section 3).

The Committee has a responsibility to promote:

- courteous and compassionate treatment of victims;
- redress (restitution) for victims for the harm that they have suffered;
- information to a victim about:
 - the progress of the prosecution of the offence in which he or she was a victim,
 - the role of the victim in the court proceeding,
- available social, legal, medical and mental health services and how to access them, and
- reporting the crime and co-operating with law enforcement agencies;
- assistance to victims in bringing their views and concerns to the attention of the court;
- measures to minimize inconvenience to victims and to ensure the safety of victims
- training for police, health, social service and other personnel as to the needs and concerns of victims; and
- research about services to victims and the needs and concerns of victims;
- making recommendations to the Minister on:
 - disbursements from the Victims Assistance Fund;
 - the development of policies respecting services to victims; and
 - any other matter that the Minister may refer to the Committee
- making an annual report of Committee activities

The Committee's objective is to support comprehensive community services including, but not limited to, victim support, information and assistance,

coordination of criminal justice and community justice interventions, and training in best practices of staff and/or volunteers in how to best meet the needs of victims.

Where a full-service agency is not feasible, the committee supports innovative and community-based workshops, events, and projects to provide support to victims of crime and to raise awareness in the community of the impact of crime on victims.

Committee Members and Recruitment

Committee member Gladys MacPherson of Fort Smith was re-appointed May 8, 2018; Gladys was first appointed in April 2012. She brings her financial background and understanding of community health and wellness to the Committee.

Victims' Assistance Committee (VAC) Members Appointment Detail:

Member	Appointed	Term Ends
Bridget Larocque Inuvik Chair – Active Member - Active	3 August 2017 Reappointed as of: August 3, 2017 for a 3-year term	Ends: 3 August 2020
Gladys Macpherson of Fort Smith Member - Active	8 May 2018 Reappointed as of: May 8, 2018 for a 3-year term	Ends: 7 May 2021
Margaret Mercredi of Yellowknife Member - Active	19 January 2017 Reappointed as of: February 3, 2017 for a 3-year term	Ends: 18 January 2020

Appendix A - Statement of Revenues & Expenditures

April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

Revenue	Amount
Victim Fine Surcharges – Territorial/Federal – Fund 19	
Revenues	
Opening Balance April 2018	\$ 259,539.31
Surcharge - Receipts	\$ 130,845.62
Interest Accrued	\$ 7,203.48
Contribution Recoveries	\$26,888.05
Total Revenues	\$ 164,937.15
Expenses	
Contributions Issued (2018-19)	\$ 73,220.00
Total Disbursements	\$ 73,220.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 351,256.46

Appendix B - Statement of Disbursements

April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

The Victims' Assistance Fund continues to support community initiatives that directly benefit victims of crime and their families and communities through:

- **Projects** - various projects, programs, public promotion/awareness, activities and events; and,
- **Research & Training** - the participation of Victim Services providers and justice partners in research projects, training, conferences and knowledge exchanges to better meet the diverse needs and rights of victims of crime and their families
- **Support and Services to Victims in the NWT** - promotion and delivery of services to victims of crime across the NWT.

Disbursements from the Victims Assistance Fund in 2018-2019 totalled \$ 73,220.00. The following summarizes the project approved by the VAC by each funding category.

Support and Services to Victims in the NWT:

1. Native Women's Association of the NWT
Supporting Families of Victims of Homicide - **\$30,800.00**

2018/19 was the third year that the Committee supported this project for family members of victims of homicide to attend the full trial of the accused. This funding is available to families across the Northwest Territories. There has been great appreciation expressed to Yellowknife Victim Services who administer the program through the Native Women's Association of the NWT. Without this funding, many families would not be able to attend the trial of the person(s) accused in the loss of their loved ones. This funding is intended to support the healing process of NWT families who have experienced the tragedy of death of a family member by homicide.

Public Information/Awareness/Promotion:

1. Status of Women Council of the NWT
2018 Family Violence Awareness Week - **\$21,750.00**

The NWT Status of Women Council of the NWT worked with numerous community partners throughout the Northwest Territories to hold Family Violence Awareness Week events. This past year, 27 activities took place in the following communities: Aklavik, Colville Lake, Délı̨ne, Dettah, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Hay River Reserve, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Paulatuk, Sambaa K'e, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, Tulita, Ulukhaktok, and Wrigley. The 2018/19 theme "Standing Together to End Family Violence" was developed by the planning committee with the belief that we all have a role to play, as well as the awareness that it will take everyone working together to end family violence.

2. Status of Women Council of the NWT
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women-
\$15,000.00

The NWT Status of Women Council of the NWT worked with partnering organizations and communities throughout the Northwest Territories to send out 200 much needed self-care kits for women fleeing violence. The kits were a collaborative effort of volunteers assembling and the RCMP distributing them throughout the territory to family violence shelters, NWT Victim Services Providers, and RCMP Detachments.

The Council also held 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence to promote a change in attitudes, knowledge and behaviours. A luncheon was held with guest speakers Dr. Pertice Moffitt and Muriel Betsina, speaking about her own experience with violence, alcoholism and beyond.

3. Inuvik Justice Committee
Healthy Relationships and Consent School Presentations - **\$5,670.00**

When making community visits, the Beaufort Delta and Inuvik Victim Services Coordinators heard from educators that school age children could really benefit from a presentation on healthy relationships and consent. These individuals developed a program for Grades 7 to 12 that provided information on sexual consent, sexting and how this related to the law and keeping themselves and others safe. The funding went towards ensuring that all community youth throughout the Beaufort Delta Region received the

presentation. They were provided with useful information that they could use to evaluate any relationships in their lives. It is hoped that youth can be empowered to make better educated decisions about their own bodies and relationships. The feedback was very positive.

Appendix C – Submitting Proposals

Proposals for either type of proposal can be submitted in fillable online documents that are on the website of the Department of Justice-Community Justice & Policing-Victim Services links below. Proposals can also be mailed through Canada Post, or delivered in person to the Community Justice & Policing Division of the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Justice, located on the 5th Floor of the Courthouse in Yellowknife.

For “Application Guidelines” for both types of proposals:

<http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/VictimServices/documents/VAFFundingGuidelines>

For “Project, Event, Activity, or Program Applications”:

http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/pdf/VictimsServices/victim_project.pdf

For “Training & Development Applications”:

http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/pdf/VictimsServices/victim_training.pdf

Mailing Address:

Community Justice & Community Policing Division
Government of the Northwest Territories
5th Floor, Courthouse
4903 – 49th Street
PO Box 1320
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 2L9

Contact Person for More Information:

Coordinator, NWT Victim Services
Community Justice & Community Policing Division, Department of Justice
Tel: 867-767-9261 ext. 82217 or ext. 82214 or Fax: 867-873-0199