



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Financial Assistance for Victims to Attend National Parole Board (NPB) Hearings

**Canadian Association for Victim Assistance
(CAVA) Conference**

**Mississauga, Ontario
October 23, 24, 25, 2006**

**Presented by Beth Heinze
Policy Centre for Victim Issues**





Financial Assistance for Victims to Attend NPB Hearings

- This new Fund responds to longstanding requests from victims and victim advocates to establish funding programs to assist them with their travel expenses when attending NPB hearings.
- The Fund became effective on November 1, 2005. The government of Canada allocated \$3.8 million over 5 years for this Fund.
- The Fund is administered by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues at the Department of Justice.





Who May Apply for Financial Assistance?

Victims may apply if they

- Are registered with Correctional Service Canada or the National Parole Board.
- Applied to the NPB to attend a hearing of the offender who harmed them, either to observe or to present a victim impact statement.
- Have been approved and security cleared by the NPB to attend the hearing.





How to Apply?

- Victims must complete an application form.
- Applications are available on the Policy Centre for Victim Issues Web site at Justice Canada (<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/voc/funding.html>) or from regional NPB Offices, or by calling Louise Emond, A/Victim Fund Manager at 1-866-544-1007.
- Applications should be submitted at least two months before the scheduled hearing date, if possible, so financial assistance will be available when required.





When will approved funding be received?

- For applications received 30 days before the hearing – the victim will receive 70% of estimated expenses approximately 3 weeks before the hearing.
- For applications received less than 30 days before the hearing – advance funding will be impossible. All expenses will be reimbursed after the hearing.
- Where an application for funding is received after the hearing date, no retroactive financial assistance will be available unless the hearing has proceeded on short notice, or where the applicant who attended can show that he or she was unaware of the Fund.





What expenses are covered?

Expenses related to travel, accommodation and meals. A decision was taken at the time of developing the Travel Fund to apply Treasury Board rates. The following expenses are covered:

- Travel, by air, bus, or train
- Personal car
- Car rentals (including collision insurance), usually for mid-size cars
- Other transportation costs, i.e. taxi, shuttle, ferry, between airport, hotel and place of hearing
- Airport fees
- Hotels, generally to a maximum of two nights
- Meals and incidentals, generally to a maximum of three days





What expenses are not eligible?

- Caregiver or babysitting expenses
- Lost wages due to attendance at hearing
- Any other expenses not related to travel or accommodation





What happens if funding is provided and the hearing ispostponed or cancelled?.....

- If the hearing is not rescheduled within three months, all funds advanced must be returned to the Department of Justice, including any unused tickets that have been purchased.
- If applicants travelled to a hearing that does not proceed at the last minute or if they cannot enter the institution, for emotional reasons, and have incurred expenses, these expenses will be reimbursed.





NPB Regional Offices responsibility

- NPB regional offices send us regular updates on:
 - Names of registered victims who are cleared to attend a hearing
 - Names of victims who attended the hearing
 - Cancellation or postponement of hearing.





Survey

- A short, confidential survey is sent to the registered victim, after the hearing, to help us evaluate the Fund and improve it.
- The survey results are aggregated so that individual victims and their responses remain anonymous.
- The survey is returned to our Evaluation Division in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.





Statistics

- Since Nov. 1, 2005 we have received **472 applications**.
 - **354** were **approved**, for a total commitment of **\$294,232**
 - Average amount/victim is **\$831**
 - **61** files were **closed** because the hearing was cancelled and **57** files are **pending** (waiting for confirmation of the hearing date)
- Out of the **472** applications received:
 - **110** from the Pacific region (**109** from BC, **1** NWT region)
 - **94** from the Prairies region (**61** from AB, **12** from MN, **21** from SK)
 - **145** from the Ontario region
 - **42** from the Quebec region
 - **68** in the Atlantic Region (**19** from NB, **8** from NL, **37** from NS, **4** from PEI)
 - **13** outside Canada (**2** from India, **10** from the USA, and **1** from Costa Rica)





Questions

- Frequently asked questions by victims.

- Any questions or comments?





Contact Information

Louise Emond
A/Victims Fund Manager
Programs Branch
Department of Justice

Toll free information line: 1-866-544-1007
Fax: 613-941-2269

Or
Beth Heinze
Policy Centre for Victim Issues
Department of Justice
Phone: 613-954-1392
Email: beth.heinze@justice.gc.ca

