

Expanded support through the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) Q&A

1. What changes are being made to support available through the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP)?

Changes to the legislation and regulation that guide CVAP will further strengthen the support available to victims, their immediate family members, and witnesses available through the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) by:

- Expanding access to benefits such as counselling for grandparents and grandchildren by removing the requirement that they were financially dependent on the victim to be eligible for benefits;
- Expanding the definition of witness by removing the requirement that a witness had a strong emotional attachment to a victim, which is a significant barrier to eligibility for those who witness violent crime in their communities; and,
- Extending the time limit for making an application for benefits from one year to two years, which will align with the time limit for civil claims in BC and is consistent with the approach taken by similar programs in other Canadian jurisdictions.
- Adding new offences to the list of those covered by CVAP, including offences that protect victims of gender-based violence, online sexual exploitation and human trafficking;
- Significantly increasing key benefit rates, including the rates paid for counselling services, and
- Expanding access to benefits required in some of the most serious cases, including vehicle acquisition for victims with significant long-term physical injuries, bereavement leave for immediate family members in fatal cases, and crime scene cleaning expenses for immediate family members and witnesses in non-fatal cases.

2. Which new offences are being added to the list of those covered by CVAP?

The following Criminal Code offences are being added to the list of prescribed offences in CVAP's regulation:

- s.160 Bestiality
- s.162 Voyeurism
- s.162.1 Publication of an intimate image without consent
- s.171.1 Making sexually explicit material available to child
- s.172.1 Luring a child
- s. 172.2 Agreement or arrangement – sexual offence against a child
- s.173 Indecent acts (only if done for a sexual purpose); Exposure

- s.279.01 Trafficking in persons
- s.279.011 Trafficking a person under the of eighteen years
- s.320.102 Conversion therapy
- s.465 Conspiracy to commit murder
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3. In addition to counselling rates, which benefit rates are being increased?

- The maximum benefit available for eligible funeral expenses is increasing to \$8,000.
- The maximum benefit available for eligible crime scene cleaning expenses is increasing to \$4,000.

4. Are the changes effective now?

- The changes are effective **January 1, 2024**.
- CVAP will be reaching out to service providers who support victims, immediate family members and witnesses in January 2024 to offer opportunities to learn more about how the changes will impact those they serve.

5. Are the changes retroactive? (i.e., Will past applicants benefit from these amendments?)

- The changes are not retroactive.
- The changes will apply to applications pertaining to a crime that occurred on or after January 1, 2024.
- The exception is the increased counselling rates: the increased rates will apply to eligible counselling services provided after January 1, 2024.

6. How do the changes impact me if I have submitted an application to CVAP and am waiting for a decision regarding eligibility?

- If the crime that is the subject of your application occurred before January 1, 2024, your application will be processed based on eligibility criteria and benefit rates that existed before the changes.
- If you are awarded counselling and you access those services after January 1, 2024, you will be eligible for the increased counselling rates.