

Discussion Paper: Funding Formula for Contracted Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs

Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch
Ministry of Justice

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Introduction

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch, Ministry of Justice is the centre of responsibility in government for victim services, crime prevention, and violence against women counselling and outreach programs. Branch funded programs and services provide a comprehensive and integrated response to victims of crime in British Columbia. Branch programs also include the Crime Victim Assistance Program, Victim Court Support Program and the Victim Safety Unit.

The focus of this document is on two major types of contracted programs:

1. Victim Service (VS) Programs
 - Police-based Victim Services
 - Community-based Victim Services

2. Violence Against Women (VAW) Programs
 - Stopping the Violence Counselling
 - Children Who Witness Abuse Program
 - Outreach Services
 - Multicultural Outreach Services

VAW Programs were transferred to the Branch in August 2009 from the then Ministry of Housing and Social Development. Part of the impetus for their transfer was the opportunity to streamline contracting processes, improve the alignment of programs serving victims of violence and view funding decisions more comprehensively. Many agencies throughout the province hold contracts for both VS and VAW programs.

This discussion paper provides some historical background and outlines funding principles and the funding formula proposed for the Branch's contracted programs.

Background

Victim Service Programs

Prior to 2002, there was no formalized funding formula for victim service programs, and resources were allocated using a variety of factors including available resources and community and program need. In 2002, a major restructuring of victim service programs and services took place. Under the new formula, eligibility and funding were linked to the number of police officers in a community (for Police-based Victim Services) and population size (for Community-based Victim Services). The formula specified that 80% of ministry funding be allocated to staff and benefit costs, with a maximum of 20% allocated to administration expenses and program delivery costs.

In 2002, the funding of all crime police-based victim service programs in communities over 300,000 was capped in order to provide funding for more specialized services (i.e. women, men, multicultural, or child-specific services) in those communities. The Province also introduced three new community-based programs in communities that were eligible for a program but were previously not funded due to a lack of resources.

Subsequently, the funding formula was enhanced in 2008 to increase funding per full-time-equivalent (FTE) from \$60,000 to \$70,000/FTE and provide a minimum funding level of 0.5 FTE per program. The cap on funding for police-based programs in large urban centres was also removed.

Violence Against Women Programs

VAW programs have not had any formal funding formula in the past and funding decisions have been based on meeting various objectives from both inside and outside the program area. Some informal parameters have been set with the transfer of these programs to the Branch, such as valuing an FTE at \$70,000 and using guidelines of 10-15% for administrative expenses but the allocation of VAW program funding around the province is inconsistent.

Challenges in Current Distribution of Funding

The Branch's budget allocation for contracted victim service and violence against women counselling and outreach programs is currently \$28.359 million. This budget allocation has remained relatively stable over the last few years and is expected to remain flat into the near future.

Of the total budget for contracted programs, \$11.849 million is allocated to victim service programs including \$6.984 million for community-based victim services and \$4.866 million for police-based victim services. The figure for police-based victim services excludes municipal contributions to the program, which is cost-shared.

Additionally, funding for contracted violence against women programs totals \$16.510 million including \$7.894 million for Stopping the Violence counselling, \$5.070 million for CWWA counselling, \$2.485 million for outreach services and \$1.062 million for multicultural outreach services.

There are a number of challenges with the current distribution of program funding:

- The funding formula has not been updated since 2008/09 for Victim Service Programs and has never been established for VAW counselling and outreach programs;
- Population and demographics have changed over the last decade while programs have largely remained the same; and,
- There is currently a wide discrepancy in program funding among VAW counselling and outreach programs that includes inconsistent funding per hour of service across services and communities and no clear formula to define the number of hours of service that a community is eligible to receive.

Ultimately, funding is not equitably or rationally distributed.

Proposed Funding Principles

To guide the development of a consistent funding formula for contracted programs the Branch has identified several key principles that it believes should underpin a funding formula for all contracted programs.

1. Fair and Equitable

The Branch recognizes that domestic violence and other forms of victimization occur everywhere in the province, and among people of all cultures, ethnicities and income levels.

Funding should be fairly and equitably distributed throughout the province. The funding formula should ensure that services are available and accessible to victims of domestic violence and other crimes wherever they reside in British Columbia.

2. Responsive to Demand for Services

Funding should be allocated in a manner that is responsive to demand for victim services in the province.

3. Transparent and Easy to Understand

The funding formula should be easily understood and easily communicated within government and among contracted service providers, contracted program delivery staff and other partners. Funding provided to jurisdictions should be transparent.

Proposed Funding Model

The funding model proposed here is based on the above funding principles and is built by equitably allocating funding to geographic areas of the province (service delivery areas). The key components of the proposed funding formula are identified below.

1. Service Delivery Areas (SDAs)

The geographic unit of funding is a service delivery area (SDA). The proposed basis for the service delivery area will continue to be police jurisdictions. The reasons for choosing police jurisdiction are:

- It captures all of the province's population
- Reliable statistics on crime and population are available annually
- It has a natural connection with and relevance to victims of crime
- It is particularly relevant for cost-shared police-based victim service programs
- Police jurisdictions are fairly stable

There are over 180 police jurisdictions in British Columbia. Some police jurisdictions are grouped together to form a service delivery area. The basis for these groupings is:

- Proximity (most communities within 70 kilometres)
- Existing police administration (some jurisdictions are already served by a single police detachment)
- Known travel patterns within a geographic area

2. Proposed Funding Factors

The proposed factors used to determine funding in a service delivery area are:

- population
- violent crime rate; and
- differences in urban vs. rural communities

Population

Population would be determined using the most up-to-date available population statistics for Police Jurisdictions compiled each year by the Police Services Division of the Ministry of Justice.

Violent Crime Rate

Violent crime rate statistics would reflect the three year average of the most up-to-date available police-reported violent crime statistics for Police Jurisdictions compiled each year by the Police Services Division of the Ministry of Justice.

The issue of unreported crime has been considered in choosing violent crime rate as a factor in the formula. There is no current evidence to support a difference in the rates of unreported crime from one community to another. For example, data from the 2009 General Social Survey on Victimization suggests that there is no impact on victimization for women living in a census metropolitan area compared to those residing in small cities, towns and rural areas.

Differences in urban vs. rural communities

Notwithstanding the relative constancy of violent crime from community to community, the Branch believes that there are several service delivery challenges facing smaller and more rural communities. Some of these challenges include:

- Economies of scale and economies of agglomeration – where demand for a service is spread out rather than concentrated, the costs of providing the same service are higher in rural areas compared to urban areas;
- Travel time and distance, geography, weather, accessibility and availability of other resources and services.
- Challenges with recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

In order to address these challenges and to promote equitable access to victim services and violence against women programs throughout the province, it is proposed that the baseline formula be adjusted to include consideration of these challenges.