
A Procurement Plan for Contracted Services to Victims of Crime

Consultation Draft – June 8, 2015

*Developed by the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch,
Ministry of Justice*



Ministry of
Justice

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Background

Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch Overview

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch of the Ministry of Justice works with communities, stakeholders, all levels of government, police and service providers to improve the safety of communities and to assist victims of violence. Our mandate includes services for victims of crime, services for women and children fleeing violence, financial assistance for victims of crime, victim safety and court support, crime prevention, restorative justice, combating human trafficking, and civil forfeiture.

Core Business Areas

Victim Services

Victim Services provides a range of supports for victims of crime. Through the Branch, the Province funds over 160 victim service programs, contracting with local, regional, and Aboriginal organizations, health authorities and non-profit organizations, to provide emotional support, information, referrals and practical assistance. The Branch also provides victim services directly. The Crime Victim Assistance Program provides financial assistance and benefits to victims of violent crime, immediate family members and some witnesses. The Court Support Unit provides services to support victims through the criminal justice process with timely information and assistance. The Victim Safety Unit provides notification to victims regarding the custodial and community status of accused persons and offenders.

Violence Against Women Programs

The Branch funds counselling and outreach services for women and children who have experienced violence. This includes over 180 counselling programs for women fleeing violence and children who witness abuse, as well as 68 outreach and multicultural outreach service programs to help identify and connect women in crisis with the supports they need. The Branch has responsibility for the provincial Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy (VAWIR).

Combating Trafficking in Persons

The Branch is responsible for overall coordination of the province's strategy to combat trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced labour. British Columbia's three year "Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking" is entering its third year, with priority focus on youth, vulnerable workers, and Aboriginal communities.

Civil Forfeiture

The intent of the Civil Forfeiture Office (CFO) is to eliminate the economic incentives derived from engaging in unlawful activities. CFO seeks to recover illicit profit, and capture and remove the capital, property and other assets from organized crime. Proceeds recovered through CFO are used to compensate eligible victims, fund crime prevention activities and cover all costs related to administration of the Civil Forfeiture Office. CFO does not operate on any appropriated funding from the Province.

Crime Prevention

The Branch works with community groups, schools, youth groups, businesses, service organizations, police and all levels of government to support and lead crime prevention programs and projects throughout the province.

Restorative Justice

The Branch supports volunteer-based Community Accountability Programs that embrace the principles of restorative justice. Programs across BC are eligible to receive up to \$2,500 in funding to support them in providing volunteer training, volunteer recognition and to offset administrative costs.

A Commitment to Gender-Based Analysis

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch is committed to a gender-based analysis of crime and will continue to support the need for programs and services dedicated to serving women and girls impacted by violence while at the same time ensuring the availability of programs and services for men and boys. This commitment is reflective of the Government of British Columbia's commitment in the *Violence-Free BC* strategy to lead strategic actions that make meaningful progress towards stopping violence against women in our province. In the context of programs dealing with crime and violence, this means a recognition that women are disproportionately impacted by certain types of violence, including sexual violence and domestic violence.

Services to Victims of Crime Initiative

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch is undertaking an initiative to prepare contracted service providers who deliver victim service and violence against women programs for the process of open procurement, scheduled to be phased in beginning in the 2015/16 fiscal year.

The Services to Victims of Crime Initiative is a multi-phased consultation that will culminate with the development of a procurement plan for the sector. The project is broken down into the following phases:



A critical component of this initiative involves consultations with contracted programs and service providers regarding program design, service delivery, as well as the procurement plan itself. Each phase of the initiative is designed to build on the preceding phase and to inform the ultimate direction of the procurement plan. A page on the Ministry's [website](#) was established to house information on the initiative including project update letters, a questions and answers document and reports on the various phases of the initiative.

Phase 1

In Phase 1 an online survey was distributed to 200 service providers. A total of 167 service providers responded to the survey for a response rate of 83.5%.

The survey results focused on the following areas:

- General Context Questions
- Program Design and Service Delivery
- Records Management Guidelines
- Connections with Other Service Providers
- Working with Aboriginal Clients
- Working with Immigrant and Refugee Clients
- Information on Community Coordination Activities

In total, Branch staff reviewed and analyzed over 3,000 narrative responses in the process of summarizing the phase 1 survey results. The results will provide guidance to the Branch on a number of issues in the coming years.

What we heard:

- By and large, service providers are interested in having program standards and best practice documents for their programs.
- Over two-thirds of service providers (67.1%) indicate that they would benefit from updated records management guidelines.
- Service providers feel most strongly connected with police and transition house programs and least connected with family justice counsellors, immigrant settlement service providers and employment and income assistance programs.
- There are challenges with current program funding.

Phase 2

As part of phase 2, the Branch held eight regional consultation sessions across the province in October, November and December 2014. The sessions provided an important opportunity to engage and consult directly with representative contracted service providers.

Meeting Dates and Locations:

Date	Location
October 9, 2014	Cranbrook
October 15, 2014	Nanaimo
October 17, 2014	Prince George
October 28, 2014	Fort St. John
November 13, 2014	Terrace
November 18, 2014	Langley
November 25, 2014	Kelowna
December 2, 2014	Vancouver

In advance of each meeting, registered participants were provided a package of materials that included a detailed agenda with relevant discussion questions as well as two discussion papers on the following topics:

- Funding Formula for Contracted Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs; and,
- Exploring Enhancements in Program Design and Service Delivery.

Meetings were also held with Provincial Associations (Ending Violence Association of BC, BC Society of Transition Houses and Police Victim Services Association of BC) as well as the RCMP “E” Division’s Crime Prevention Support Section.

Phase 3

The third phase of this initiative involves the development of this draft procurement plan.

Why a Procurement Plan?

Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch is required to have a procurement process for acquiring government services that is fair, transparent, accountable and aligned with government-wide procurement policy. The overall goal of open procurement is to ensure that contracts are awarded to the most qualified proponent. Successful proponents will demonstrate relevant capacity and experience.

In recent years, the majority of contracts for these services have been direct awarded to agencies without an open process. In order to align with government procurement policy, the Branch is moving towards a process to ensure contracts for these services are awarded in a fair, transparent, and accountable manner.

What is Open Procurement?

Open procurement is a process for contracting services where potential providers submit a competitive proposal. Open procurement aligns with the Province's procurement policy and with other government departments that have already adopted such processes.

Government procurement policy can be found in Chapter 6 of the Core Policy and Procedures Manual, available at www.fin.gov.bc.ca/ocg/fmb/manuals/CPM/CPMtoc.htm.

Government procurement policy is driven by several key principles:

Competition

Competition for programs can help ensure that government identifies and obtains the best organization possible to run its programs. Government contracts must conform to national and regional trade agreements and holding an open bidding competition is a major requirement of this type of legislation.

Value For Money

Value for money means ensuring that government gets the best value for the money it spends on goods and services.

Transparency

Transparency ensures fair access to all legislation, regulations, procedures, guidelines and administrative rulings as they apply to procurement decisions. All vendors are provided with or have access to procurement information at the same time.

Accountability

Government ministries are accountable for the results of their procurement decisions and must be able to demonstrate that they have followed fair and open processes for acquiring goods and

services. Government is also responsible for providing a fair, prompt and economical Vendor Complaint Process.

What is in this Consultation Draft?

This draft procurement plan builds on the consultations undertaken in Phases 1 and 2 of the Services to Victims of Crime Initiative and directly incorporates feedback heard through the regional consultation sessions. The consultation draft of the procurement plan covers a number of areas including:

- Issues pertaining to program design and service delivery that were discussed at the regional sessions;
- An overview of proposed service areas;
- Potential changes to the draft funding formula based on service provider feedback as well as additional information on program level funding;
- A draft Request for Proposal (RFP) document;
- Tools and resources for responding to open procurement; and,
- Next steps for moving toward open procurement.

How to provide feedback

Throughout the Services to Victims of Crime Initiative the Branch has committed to receiving and incorporating feedback and input received from service providers and other stakeholders from across the province as it moves forward. Feedback received on the draft plan will be carefully considered when finalizing the procurement plan.

At the end of the draft plan a link to a survey is provided to facilitate feedback. Contracted service providers will be provided with a direct invitation to complete the survey on behalf of their organization.

Part 1: Program Design and Service Delivery

Background

The Services to Victims of Crime Initiative has provided an important opportunity to consult with contracted stakeholders on specific program design and service delivery issues.

Through an online survey of contracted service providers during Phase 1, service providers indicated that the services described in Schedule A (services to be provided) of contracts accurately reflected the work their agencies were delivering. Further, service providers indicated an interest in having program standards and best practice documents for their programs either updated or developed – this is an area that the Branch hopes to explore further in the coming years.

Phase 2 Regional Consultations provided an opportunity to consult with contracted service providers on several additional issues pertaining to program design and service delivery including:

- Exploring the Combination of Community-based Victim Services (CBVS) and Outreach Services;
- Enhancing Services in Rural and Remote Communities; and,
- Contract Language Related to Coordination Activities.

Exploring the Combination of Community-based Victim Services and Outreach Services

Outreach Services were transferred to the Branch in August 2009. Through Branch reviews as well as conversations with several agencies, the suggestion was made to explore the potential combination of these services.

A number of reasons were cited for exploring a combined service. These included:

- Similar clients served by both program types
- A partial overlap of service deliverables (e.g. emotional support, referrals, safety planning, role in community coordination, and assistance with accompaniment and supports in relation to family law matters)
- Situations where outreach services and community-based victim service programs were operated by the same agency
- Opportunities to provide increased flexibility to service providers in the provision of these services through a single program type

The Branch consulted on both the potential opportunities and challenges that a combination of CBVS and outreach services might bring.

What we heard through consultation

While there are benefits to combining the two types of programs, there are also important challenges that require careful consideration. Some benefits to combining these services include providing

agencies with increased flexibility in managing their program resources, making staffing of part-time positions easier, as well as realizing administrative efficiencies related to contracts and reporting.

In many communities, the two program types are distinct both in the services delivered and in the clients served and as a result do not lend themselves well to a combined service. The intention of Outreach Services is to connect women fleeing violence in relationships to important services and supports whereas Community-based Victim Service Programs are mandated to serve both men and women in most communities and largely focus on the provision of justice system supports. In some communities, Outreach Service programs serve the surrounding First Nations communities and women that would not otherwise seek support and assistance through mainstream/office-based services.

A combined service may also result in challenges in managing competing priorities. The high demand on Community-based Victim Service Programs to support victims through court may result in diminished capacity for Outreach activities in a combined service.

Proposed Actions and Next Steps

There are no plans to proceed with a combined service model for Outreach Services and Community-based Victim Services at this time. It is proposed that the two service types will remain distinct. However, opportunities to combine these services could be explored on a community-by-community basis.

Enhancing Services in Rural and Remote Areas

The majority of British Columbians have access to victim service and/or violence against women programs. This includes access to local, community programs and/or, at a minimum, province-wide services such as VictimLink BC (1-800 Helpline) and the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP).

Given existing funding levels and relative levels of demand for services, the reality is that it is not possible to have in-person programs in every community in the province. The Branch consulted with service providers on innovative ways to enhance services to rural and remote areas of the province. Service providers were asked if there were innovative service delivery models currently in place that could be expanded on or other ideas for enhancing services to rural and remote areas.

What we heard through consultation

There are many examples that highlight the significant efforts contracted service providers make to ensure services are provided to those who reside in remote and isolated communities. In one example, a program discussed making connections with a local fire fighter in a remote community who was then available to provide support in the event of a crisis. Other examples include providing training to other community members and paraprofessionals that are available to provide support if and when required. Many service providers shared experiences with setting up and managing volunteer resources. While the use of volunteers has proven successful in some areas, recruiting, training and managing volunteers can be resource intensive.

There are opportunities to utilize technology such as through video conferencing tools like Skype and FaceTime. These tools are already being used in some communities to provide clinical supervision for staff. In addition, some communities have participated in Telehealth programs using videoconferencing and supporting technologies to put patients in touch with health professionals in distant communities. There are possibilities to expand the use of these tools for services to clients such as counselling. It was further suggested that these mediums be explored for court appearances for victims/witnesses on the basis that these tools are already available to an accused/offender and would be of benefit to victims of crime as well.

VictimLink BC was highlighted as an important resource and that utilizing technological options such as SMS (text messaging), email and social media (e.g. Twitter) might lead to increased reporting and reach a younger demographic. Specific ideas to promote VictimLink BC included renting advertising at bus stop benches, utilizing CB radio networks in remote communities, and educating more police officers and services providers (i.e. public health nurses) about the resources in the community.

Face-to-face interactions and relationships are equally important, particularly when working with Aboriginal and immigrant/refugee clients. In addition, the use of technology can be hampered by the availability of broadband Internet – a service not available in some rural communities.

Participants of the regional consultation sessions made several other suggestions including:

- setting up a special travel fund that could be accessed by service providers in crisis situations;
- establishing regional response teams that could be called upon to provide support in a region when needed; and,
- utilizing existing specialized provincial services where local expertise may not exist for working with a particular client group (e.g. new immigrants or refugees).

Proposed Actions and Next Steps

In March, 2014, a public awareness campaign for VictimLink BC focused on victims of crime in rural B.C. The project included advertisements in more than 80 rural B.C. newspapers, public service announcements on 50 rural B.C. radio stations, and online advertising through social media (Google ads and Facebook). During the campaign, there was a greater than 1400 percent increase in visits to the VictimLink BC website over the previous week as well as a 22 percent increase in calls to the VictimLink BC telephone line. Opportunities to increase awareness of VictimLink BC in rural and remote areas of B.C. will be pursued.

The Branch has received support through the Department of Justice (DOJ) Canada's Victims Fund during the 2015-16 fiscal year for a project to explore alternative victim service delivery models in rural and remote areas. This pilot project will explore the feasibility of delivering victim services in a variety of ways other than by face-to-face, such as by telephone, text message and/or Live Meeting/Skype to victims who do not live near a victim service program. The pilot project will include an outreach,

education and awareness-raising component about the alternate service delivery options. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of providing culturally relevant service delivery, particularly for Aboriginal communities.

In its work to define Service Areas in B.C., the Branch has identified and is working toward allocating resources to four new rural service areas: Lytton, Stewart, Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene. These are rural/remote areas that do not currently have in-person services available to them. Key learnings from work supported through the DOJ funded project to explore service delivery options in these communities will be utilized.

Contract Language on Coordination Activities

In addition to direct service delivery with clients, many Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs are involved in local community coordination activities involving criminal justice and community partners. For example, many programs are involved with their local Interagency Case Assessment Teams (ICATs), and work alongside other service providers from various sectors (police, victim services, Ministry of Children and Family Development, transition houses and others) to share information, identify risks and safety plan for specific high risk domestic violence cases.

The importance of coordinated responses to domestic violence, including Inter-Agency Case Assessment Teams (ICATs) and Domestic Violence Units (DVUs), was also echoed at the Justice Summit that was held in November 2014.

As part of the consultation sessions, the Branch sought feedback on whether contract language could be strengthened as it pertains to these kinds of activities to ensure contracts are both reflective of current work as well as to underscore the importance of community coordination activities in providing services to victims of crime and violence. In addition to asking what service providers thought of more explicitly including coordination activities in the contracts, the Branch also explored which specific program types should have coordination activities referenced in their contracts.

What we heard through consultation

There is general support for including coordination activities in contract language. Some participants indicated that the current contract language is adequate while others expressed a need for language that more clearly speaks to the leadership role that agencies and programs are playing in coordination

Committed to Community Coordination

In the Phase 1 survey, over three-quarters of programs (76.5%) reported they were involved in local VAWIR/domestic violence committees with over 60% of service providers indicating they were involved in an Interagency Case Assessment Team (ICAT). Over 70% identified other community coordination activities, the most common of which related to children and youth (largely working with MCFD) as well as various service coordination and interagency committees.

activities. Some participants expressed concern with mandating coordination activities in contract language and suggested a preference for contract language that provided some flexibility to agencies providing services.

Participants acknowledged the importance of coordination and suggested that this work should be defined more clearly to articulate that coordination is more than simply networking; it involves discussing clients' needs and safety and having difficult conversations with partners about situations where clients may fall through the cracks. Many suggested that leading and participating in coordination activities is simply best practice and should be reflected in more than just contract language, including in program standards and best practice manuals. There was also acknowledgment that this work requires a specialized skillset and that not everyone was suited to leading coordination work. Further, some suggested that additional resources and funding might be required to better support community coordination activities, notwithstanding the significant amount of time and energy that many agencies already put into these activities.

Some participants cited challenges with getting certain partners to the table and indicated that not everyone embraced a women-centred approach to issues impacting women's safety. Several participants suggested that coordination was so important that it should be mandated in contracts and that doing so would further validate their work at the community level. Others cautioned against this approach, stating that mandating one agency to lead this work at the community level could shift the community dynamic and was counter to the spirit of coordination work. In general, the majority of participants indicated that they were supportive of seeing community coordination activities better captured in contracts for all programs but that the contract language should allow agencies some flexibility to determine how coordination work is carried out.

Proposed Actions and Next Steps

Contract schedules will be updated for all programs to include the following clause:

- Where feasible, lead and/or participate in community coordination activities such as local domestic violence/Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR) Committees, Interagency Case Assessment Teams (ICATs) and other local community coordination initiatives.

Part 2: Defining Service Areas

Background

The Services to Victims of Crime Initiative provides an opportunity to review the geographic area covered by programs and services across the province. The Branch calls each of these geographic areas a *service area*.

Historically, the Branch has used police jurisdictions as the basis for determining where one service area ends and another begins. There are several reasons for choosing police jurisdictions:

- They capture all of the province's population;
- Reliable statistics on crime and population are available annually;
- They have a natural connection with and relevance to victims of crime;
- They are particularly relevant for cost-shared police-based victim service programs; and,
- Police jurisdictions are fairly stable.

There are currently over 180 police jurisdictions in British Columbia. However, some of these police jurisdictions have been grouped together to form a service area. There are several reasons for grouping these jurisdictions together:

- Existing police administration (some jurisdictions are already served by a single police detachment comprising multiple police jurisdictions);
- Proximity (most communities within a service area are within 70 kilometres from a larger population centre); and,
- Known travel patterns within a geographic area.

As part of the phase 2 regional consultation sessions, the Branch indicated that it would continue to use police jurisdictions as the basis for identifying service areas moving forward.

Service Areas

In reviewing current service areas, the Branch has sought to ensure that services are provided in as many areas of the province as possible. While the vast majority of service areas would remain the same, the Branch is proposing the addition and combination of some service areas to create new service areas. Service areas would be combined where it makes geographic sense from a service perspective, and new service areas would be developed where geography and population warrant the consideration of additional or new programming.

All told, the Branch has identified 97 potential service areas including 10 new service areas (West Kelowna, Enderby-Armstrong, Summerland, Ladysmith, New Hazelton, Agassiz-Harrison, Lytton,

Stewart, Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene). The goal is to have in-person programming available in some capacity in each of these service areas, forming one of the most comprehensive, community-based networks of services across British Columbia.

The 97 service areas are listed below in alphabetic order:

100 Mile House	Abbotsford	Agassiz-Harrison	Alexis Creek
Anahim Lake	Arrow Lakes	Ashcroft	Atlin
Bella Bella	Bella Coola	Boundary	Burnaby
Burns Lake	Campbell River	Castlegar	Chase
Chetwynd	Chilliwack	Clearwater-Barriere	Clinton
Courtenay-Comox	Cowichan Valley	Cranbrook	Creston
Dawson Creek	Dease Lake	Delta	Elk Valley
Enderby-Armstrong	Fort Nelson	Fort St. James	Fort St. John
Golden	Gulf Islands	Hope	Invermere
Kamloops	Kaslo	Kelowna	Keremeos
Kimberley	Kitimat	Ladysmith	Langley
Lillooet	Lytton	Mackenzie	Maple Ridge
Masset	McBride-Valemount	Merritt	Mission
Nanaimo	Nelson	New Hazelton	New Westminster
Nisga'a	Nootka Sound	North Shore	Oceanside
Penticton	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Port McNeill
Powell River	Prince George	Prince Rupert	Princeton
Queen Charlotte City	Quesnel	Revelstoke	Richmond
Salmo	Salmon Arm	Smithers	Sooke
Southern Okanagan	Squamish	Stewart	Summerland
Sunshine Coast	Surrey	Takla Landing	Terrace
Tofino-Ucluelet	Trail	Tri-Cities	Tsay Keh Dene
Tumbler Ridge	Vancouver	Vanderhoof	Vernon
Victoria	West Kelowna	Whistler	White Rock
Williams Lake			

The identification of these 97 service areas will assist in planning for service delivery and open procurement. While the majority of services would be linked to a particular service area, further analysis will be done when procuring for services in order to ensure responsiveness to the local community context and existing service structures. For example, despite the fact that Vancouver is a single service area, there are numerous areas within Vancouver where specific services may be targeted including UBC and the Downtown Eastside. Similarly, while services will generally be linked to a single service area, it may be possible to identify regional services in some of the more urban areas of the province that cover multiple service areas.

In-person services would be provided at one or more locations within the service area. There may be several communities within a service area. The proposal is not to mandate that services be provided via distinct in-person services in every community that exists within a service area as that is likely not operationally feasible in most service areas.

Service Area Profiles

A series of draft profiles have been developed to provide an overview of each of the proposed service areas. Each profile contains a basic map of the service area and information on the following items:

- *Geographic Profile*
Includes Municipalities Served; Local First Nation(s); Regional District; Local Health Area(s); and Police Jurisdiction(s)
- *Sociodemographic Profile*
Includes Population, Aboriginal Population; Visible Minority Population, Senior Population and Violent Crime Rate.
- *Current Branch Programs*
Identifies what Branch programs are currently available in the service area.
- *Other Key Programs/Services*
Identifies other key programs/services available in the service area.

Draft service area profiles for each of the 97 service areas can be found at the following link:

<http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/service-provider/index.htm>

Service area profiles will be used as both a planning and educational tool. Profiles will be updated regularly as new research/information becomes available.

Part 3: Exploring a New Funding Formula for Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs

Background

An important part of the Services to Victims of Crime Initiative is exploring the development of a new funding formula for contracted victim service and violence against women (VAW) programs. VAW programs were originally transferred to the Branch in August 2009 after having been moved through several ministries in a relatively short period of time. Part of the impetus for their transfer to the Branch was the opportunity to streamline contracting processes, improve the alignment of programs serving victims of violence across the province, view funding decisions more comprehensively, and provide some much needed stability to the sector. It was recognized at the time that many agencies throughout the province held contracts for both victim service and VAW programs.

As part of the Phase 2 regional consultation sessions, the Branch provided an overview of the current funding distribution for contracted programs and described some of the challenges with the way in which funding is currently distributed across the province. A discussion paper with additional background information on the funding formula was provided to participants in advance of each session ([Link](#)).

Overview of Funding Distribution for Contracted Programs

At each regional consultation session, the Branch provided an overview of current funding for contracted programs and acknowledged the continued challenging fiscal environment for both government and service providers. In fiscal 2014-15, the Branch allocated \$28,359,424 for contracted victim service and violence against women programs. This amount has remained stable for several years and is broken down by program as show in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Overview of Branch Funding of Contracted Services (Allocated 2014-15)

Program Area	\$ Amount*	# of Programs
CWWA Counselling	\$5,069,536	86
Outreach	\$2,484,884	55
Multicultural Outreach	\$1,061,505	11
STV Counselling	\$7,894,014	95
Community-based Victim Services	\$6,983,846	69
Police-based Victim Services	\$4,865,638	92
Totals	\$28,359,424	408

* Note: Does not include municipal contributions or additional funds contributed by service providers through fundraising activities.

Challenges with the Current Distribution of Funding

There are challenges with the way in which funding for contracted victim service and VAW programs is currently distributed. These challenges include an aging funding formula for victim service programs and the historic lack of a clear funding formula for VAW counselling and outreach programs.

Prior to 2002, there was no formalized funding formula for victim service programs, and resources were allocated using a variety of factors including community, program need and available resources. In 2002, a major restructuring of victim service delivery, programs, and funding 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. The last major update to victim service funding occurred in 2008, when \$2.7 million in new funding was announced for victim service programs and the funding formula was updated.

In contrast to victim service programs, VAW counselling and outreach programs have never had a formal funding formula and funding decisions have typically been based on meeting various objectives from both inside and outside the program area. Some informal parameters were set up with the transfer of these programs to the Branch, such as using a guideline of 10-15% for administrative expenses, but the allocation of VAW program funding around the province has remained inconsistent.

To ensure that funding is equitably distributed across the province, the Branch put forward several proposals in the Phase 2 regional consultation sessions. These proposals focused on the following areas:

- High-level key principles to guide the development of a new funding formula for all of the Branch's contracted victim service and VAW programs; and,
- Funding factors to be used in a new funding formula.

Table 2 below outlines the proposed key principles and funding factors that the Branch put forward in the fall 2014 consultation sessions.

Table 2. Proposed Key Principles and Funding Factors (Fall 2014)

<i>Proposed Key Principles (Fall 2014)</i>	<i>Proposed Funding Factors (Fall 2014)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair and Equitable• Responsive to Demand for Services• Transparent and Easy to Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population• Violent Crime Rate• Differences in Urban vs. Rural Communities

What we heard through consultation

There was a general recognition of the challenges associated with the way that program funding is

currently distributed across the province. At the same time, increasing demand for services and complexities associated with meeting clients' needs were all factors having an impact on the ability to provide high quality services. There were examples identified of pressures on programs related to the loss of certain services in rural communities as well as the travel required and associated costs of providing services in areas with difficult geographic terrain. Challenges with the recruitment and retention of qualified staff were also frequently raised.

There was general agreement that a new funding formula would assist toward addressing some of the discrepancies in funding. There was also general acceptance of the proposed key principles underpinning the development of a new formula. That said, there was also some desire for a clearer definition of the various principles. Participants also suggested possible additional principles, including adding the accessibility/availability of services as a principle.

There was significant discussion, suggestions and ideas about the funding factors that should be used and how they might be weighted. Generally there was agreement with the proposed considerations for determining service areas and interest for clearer boundaries so that they are better defined. With respect to population, some communities experience significant fluctuations in population related to tourism (during summer and/or winter months) and in some communities due to temporary work camps in the resource sector. The proposed factor of differences between rural and urban communities was generally accepted with the acknowledgement that services are generally more costly to provide in rural and remote areas as compared to more urban areas.

The proposed use of violent crime rate as a factor in the formula garnered a substantial amount of discussion in each session. The discussion centred primarily on the fact that the vast majority of power-based crimes, including domestic violence and sexual violence, go unreported to the police and therefore would not be captured in violent crime statistics. There was discussion and acknowledgment in each session about general consistencies in levels of reporting across communities and that research based on the General Social Survey on Victimization administered by Statistics Canada has found that there is no evidence to support differences in the rates of reporting from one community to another (i.e. recent research suggests there are no differences in victimization reporting rates from urban areas to smaller cities, towns and rural areas). The research notwithstanding, it was suggested that reporting rates in certain communities, such as Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and more rural Aboriginal communities, would almost certainly be lower than reporting rates found elsewhere.

Participants suggested a need to look at other factors for the formula such as employment rates, divorce rates, rates of children and youth in care and other socioeconomic factors as well as factors that might be specific to certain communities. Several participants suggested the need to look at trauma as a factor. Police-based Victim Service programs shared that they spend much of their time providing crisis response to trauma related incidents such as motor vehicle accidents, sudden deaths, suicides, building fires and other incidents where crime may not have been a factor. Agencies that deliver Stopping the Violence Counselling programs also indicated that they are working with women who have experienced historical trauma (historical abuse and sexual assault) and that these would not necessarily be captured in the factors being considered. Further, participants acknowledged that many Aboriginal people have

suffered intergenerational trauma and the effects of residential schools, and that Aboriginal people are over-represented in the justice system as both victims and offenders.

Some participants questioned whether program statistics already submitted by agencies through monthly reporting systems (OPRA and STV-DES) could be used to quantify demand for services. While there was much discussion about the need to update these systems, there was interest in seeing how the Branch utilizes the data that are captured by these systems.

Proposed Actions and Next Steps

Based on the feedback received, the Branch has updated the key principles and funding factors included in the draft funding formula. Both the key principles and funding factors are detailed in the next section.

Draft Funding Formula

Key Principles for a new Funding Formula

The Branch has adjusted the key principles presented in the regional consultation sessions including adding a new key principle concerning province-wide availability of programs and services. The revised key principles are identified below.

Proposed Key Principles (Spring 2015)

1. Responsive to Demand for Services

Funding for services is allocated in a manner that is responsive to demand for services in the province. Funding levels are linked directly to key drivers of demand for service.

2. Province-wide Availability of Programs and Services

Programs and services are available across the province.

3. Fair and Equitable Distribution of Funds

Funding is distributed fairly and equitably to service areas throughout the province. The distribution of funding to service areas is proportional, consistently applied, and uses factors that are directly comparable from one service area to another.

4. Transparent and Easy to Understand

The funding formula is easily understood and communicated within government and with contracted service providers. Funding for services is tied to a transparent funding formula.

Draft Funding Formula Factors

With respect to the funding formula itself, a new funding factor, a socioeconomic index, has been added in response to feedback received from service providers during the Phase 2 consultations.

It is proposed that each service area will be allocated a portion of available funding based on four factors:

1. Population – 50% of the base funding formula
2. Violent Crime Rate – 40% of the base funding formula
3. Index of Socioeconomic Factors – 10% of the base funding formula
4. Urban-Rural Cost Adjustment – Once a baseline funding amount is established based on the first three factors, a final factor called the Urban-Rural Cost Adjustment would be applied

A detailed description of each funding formula factor is provided below.

Population

Population comprises 50% of the base funding formula. Population is a common factor in funding formulas as service levels are often tied to the potential pool of clients in a given service area.

Population is determined using the most currently available population statistics for Police Jurisdictions compiled each year by the Police Services Division of the Ministry of Justice. The population count used is inclusive of the entire service area and not just the major municipalities, thereby ensuring 100% population coverage for the province.

Violent Crime Rate

Violent Crime Rate comprises 40% of the base funding formula. Violent crime rate is based on reported crime and includes crimes which involve the use or threatened use of violence against a person, including homicide, attempted murder, assault, sexual assault, robbery, uttering threats, criminal harassment and forcible confinement. Violent crime statistics are determined using the three year average of the most currently available police-reported violent crime statistics for Police Jurisdictions compiled each year by the Police Services Division of the Ministry of Justice. Violent crime was chosen over the general crime rate as this type of crime is a source of significant trauma and the focus of most of our programs and services.

Violent crime rate is being used as a proxy for *relative demand* for services. We know that the majority of domestic violence and sexual violence clients do not report to police and are not captured in violent crime statistics. However, there is no easy way to identify and quantify this unreported crime consistently across the province through other means.

Using existing data from the OPRA and DES systems has been considered, however, the data does not provide a representative snapshot of demand due to inequities associated with the current distribution of funding; in other words, programs that receive more funding from the Branch typically see more clients and using this data would simply perpetuate the existing, inequitable funding distribution.

Data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey on Victimization has also been considered, however, it is not available at the community level for every community in the province.

Violent crime rate is considered an acceptable proxy for *relative demand* based on research that Statistics Canada has conducted which suggests that there is no evidence to support a difference in the

rates of unreported crime from larger communities to smaller communities.¹ More specifically, data from the 2009 General Social Survey on Victimization confirms 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.² In other words, women are just as likely to report to police in a rural community as they are in an urban community. This pattern holds true for all violent crime.

Specific concerns were raised by some service providers about reporting by Aboriginal women but here too data from Statistics Canada is instructive. For example, while research recognizes that Aboriginal women differ from non-Aboriginal women in their risk of victimization (more than 2.5 times likely to be victims of spousal violence), the likelihood of reporting victimization to police is not significantly different.³ In fact, in the most recent General Social Survey on Victimization, 31% of Aboriginal women indicated that they reported the spousal violence to police compared to 24% for non-Aboriginal women.⁴

Theoretically, violent crime rates could be multiplied by a set amount in each service area to try to account for those who do not report to police, but because the multiplier used would be the same in each service area, the relative weight of this factor would not change from one area to another and the impact on the funding formula would also not change. As a result, violent crime rate is considered the best proxy available for accounting for *relative demand* for service between service areas. It is recognized that the use of violent crime rate does not represent the *actual demand* for services within service areas or in the province more generally.

Overall Socioeconomic Index

Feedback from the Phase 2 regional consultation session suggested the need to look beyond population and violent crime rate and to address other socioeconomic factors that impact a community's well-being such as employment rates, rates of children and youth in care and other socioeconomic factors. Service providers also suggested that things such as suicides, property crime, responding to MVAs, accidental and sudden deaths should also be considered. Research was conducted in this area and a new funding formula factor has been introduced based on a series of regional socioeconomic profiles developed for the Ministry of Health by BCStats.

The overall socioeconomic index summarizes social and economic conditions over a wide variety of indicators into a single composite index for each service area in the province. Six indexes are combined to form an overall regional socioeconomic index. The main indexes include Human Economic Hardship, Crime, Health Problems, Education Concerns, Youth at Risk and Children at Risk. The overall socioeconomic index incorporates many of the variables that service providers raised in the regional consultation sessions:

¹ Statistics Canada (2007). A comparison of large urban, small urban and rural crime rates, 2005. p. 3.

² Statistics Canada (2013). *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends*. p. 63.

³ Statistics Canada (2013). *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends*. p. 97.

⁴ Statistics Canada (2011). *Violent Victimization of Aboriginal Women in the Canadian Provinces, 2009*. p. 10.

- Percent of the population on income assistance
- Serious property crime rates
- Potential years of life lost due to accidental causes
- Potential years of life lost due to suicide/homicide
- Percent of population age 15-24 who attended school
- Children in care per 1,000 population

A complete list of the data variables comprising each sub-index and the overall socioeconomic index is available on the BCStats website at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Files/a0b6037e-1d40-4852-880a-3b728f264144/Socio-EconomicProfilesandIndices-Variables.pdf.

The socioeconomic index comprises 10% of the base funding formula. While this level is lower than the other two funding factors, it is important to recognize that Branch-funded programs and services do not have a direct responsibility to address all socioeconomic issues such as income assistance rates, education outcomes, health outcomes or children in care. The overall socioeconomic index is determined using the most currently available statistics compiled by BCStats.

Urban-Rural Cost Adjustment

The Urban-Rural Cost Adjustment (URCA) is the final funding formula factor. The URCA takes into account economies of scale and agglomeration reached in large urban centres and progressively allocates a portion of funding to smaller towns and rural areas in recognition of the challenges these areas face in service delivery. Challenges include, but are not limited to, geography, travel time and distance, weather, accessibility and availability of other resources and services, and challenges with recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

The URCA is a percentage that is assigned to service areas which are grouped based on their urban/rural and population characteristics. It is applied *after* the base funding formula is determined using the factors of population, violent crime rate and the overall socioeconomic index. Table 4 below outlines the proposed URCA rates for each grouping of service areas.

Table 3. Urban-Rural Cost Adjustment (URCA) Rates by service area

<i>Service Area Grouping</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>URCA %</i>
CMAs	Service areas in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) ⁵	80%
>50K	Non-CMA's, greater than 50,000 population	100%

⁵ A Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is a Statistics Canada category consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core with a population of at least 100,000.

20K<50K	Non-CMA's, population between 20,000 and 50,000	120%
10K<20K	Non-CMA's, population between 10,000 and 20,000	140%
5K<10K	Non-CMA's, population between 5,000 and 10,000	160%
1K<5K	Non-CMA's, population between 1,000 and 5,000	180%
<1K	Non-CMA's, population less than 1,000	Not Applicable

As Table 3 shows, service areas are broken down into seven groups based on urban/rural and population characteristics. As you move from more urban to smaller and more rural communities the relative amount of funding a service area will receive increases. For example, the target funding allocation for a service area in the 10K<20K group is calculated by multiplying its baseline funding amount (determined by population, violent crime rate and the socioeconomic index) by 140%. Service areas with fewer than 1,000 people have been removed from the funding formula due to their extremely small size. Funding will be provided for tailored services in these service areas.

Summarizing the Draft Funding Formula

The proposed funding formula will identify a target level of funding for each of the 97 service areas. The funding formula can be summarized by the following basic equation:

Funding Formula =

$$[Population (50\%) + Violent Crime Rate (40\%) + Socioeconomic Index (10\%)] \times \\ Urban-Rural Cost Adjustment (URCA) percentage$$

Ultimately, the proposed funding formula would more fairly and transparently distribute funding around the province in a manner that is responsive to service demand and better supports victims of crime in British Columbia.

Program Level Funding

Background

As part of the broader work on a funding formula, the Branch is also examining program level funding, or the costing of Branch programs and services. The Branch is proposing to standardize this so that program level funding is equitable across the province and also provides enough flexibility for service providers to address unique issues in each service area.

It is proposed that both victim service and violence against women programs be funded based on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. This would align VAW programs with victim service programs and better account for the reality that program staff do not spend their entire day directly serving clients.

Staff may require training, undertake administrative tasks, coordinate with other services providers and undertake work that supports the organization as a whole.

Draft Program Level Funding Amounts

To ensure consistency across program types and service areas, it is proposed that FTEs be funded at the following levels and rates:

- Use the CSSEA/BCGEU/CUPE union wage grid to fund all programs to the *maximum* Step 4 level
- Add up to 25% benefits on top of wages
- Add up to 25% program delivery costs on top of wages and benefits to cover things such as travel, training, and program coordination
- Add up to 10% administration costs on top of wages, benefits and program delivery costs to cover back-office administrative functions and management
- Incrementally provide negotiated wage increases to all programs for the current collective agreement
- Undertake all funding calculations using a 35 hours per week schedule (7 hours per day) in line with Government of British Columbia standard operating hours

Because Outreach and Multicultural Outreach Workers do not have union benchmarks, special consideration has been given to these two program types:

- *Outreach Workers*

It is proposed that Outreach Workers will be funded at the same level as Victim Service Workers. While outreach workers play a unique role in the community, they provide similar types of supports to those provided by victim service workers including emotional and practical support, safety planning, accompaniment and advocacy. It is not intended that Outreach Workers provide the type of counselling offered by STV Counsellors. STV counselling is its own program type and in every community where an Outreach program exists, the Branch is committed to ensuring there is also an STV counselling program available for the provision of counselling services. Funding Outreach Workers at an STV counselling rate would severely limit the availability of outreach services in the province as the current average costs for these services are significantly below those of STV counselling programs.

- *Multicultural Outreach Workers*

It is proposed that Multicultural Outreach Workers be funded at the same rate as CWWA counsellors because of the specific and unique reference in Multicultural Outreach program contracts to the provision of counselling services for women. The CWWA counselling grid level is on average higher than the current average hourly cost paid by service providers for Multicultural Outreach Workers. As such, using the CWWA grid level while maintaining similar FTE levels will provide a modest increase to funding for service providers providing Multicultural Outreach in the province.

Any funding for wages above and beyond the maximum Step 4 grid level would require programs to utilize funding available through program delivery, administration and management costs and/or funding from alternate sources.

Minimum FTEs

As part of the consultation process, several service providers indicated a desire to fund programs to a minimum of 0.5 FTEs. Unfortunately, the funding envelope and significant coverage required for the province prevents this from happening in every service area. Consequently, it is proposed that the minimum funding level be set at 0.2 FTE (equivalent to 1 day per week of service) and increase at regularized 0.1 FTE (half day) increments where funding is available (e.g. 0.3 FTE, 0.4 FTE, 0.5 FTE, etc.). This is similar to the current minimum funding levels for contracted programs and services.

Part 4: Open Procurement Implementation Plan

Background

Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch is required to have a procurement process for acquiring government services that is fair, transparent, accountable and aligned with government-wide procurement policy. In recent years, the majority of contracts for our services have been direct awarded to agencies without an open process. In order to align with government procurement policy, we are moving towards a process to ensure contracts for these services are awarded in a fair, transparent, and accountable manner.

As part of the regional consultation sessions, a commitment was made to provide additional information about open procurement as part of the draft procurement plan, including a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) document for comment as well as further details around timelines and activities. This section of the draft procurement plan speaks in greater detail to the open procurement implementation plan.

Request for Proposals (RFP)

As noted in the regional consultation sessions, the main type of solicitation document that will be used is a Request for Proposals (RFP). A RFP is a request to proponents (service providers) to submit proposals on how, they would provide a good or service in response to an identified problem, requirement or objective. The selection of the proposal is typically based on evaluation criteria, including proponent experience, approach effectiveness, value and price of the proposed solution.

What we heard through consultation

Most attendees at the consultation sessions indicated some past experience and/or familiarity with RFPs and open procurement processes. Concerns were raised about a number of areas pertaining to open procurement including:

- Competition between agencies potentially damaging relationships;
- Changes in service providers potentially impacting adversely on vulnerable clients;
- Agencies from outside communities and/or outside the province bidding on contracts for the delivery of services;
- Agencies potentially underbidding for contracts;
- Time and resources required to respond to RFPs;
- A desire for multi-year contracts.

Proposed actions and next steps

The Branch acknowledges the concerns of service providers and has tried to address many of them through the drafting of the RFP document itself. A number of options have been explored for the type of Request for Proposal process that will be used. The Branch is proposing the use of a “Negotiated Request for Proposal” or NRFP.

NRFPs generally allow for a more flexible process such as allowing for a rectification period for missing information e.g. signatures, missed pages, etc. A draft NRFP is available for review on our website at the following link:

<http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/service-provider/index.htm>

A single document for all services in a service area has been created in an effort to streamline the application process and ensure service providers have a full understanding of the services being procured in their area. This approach has the added benefit of allowing respondents (service providers) to answer questions pertaining to their agency only once and then moving on to answer questions specific to the different program types they may choose to bid on. This should help to reduce the amount of time it takes service providers to complete the process.

Service providers will have adequate time to respond. The NRFP process is expected to be open for 4 to 6 weeks. Details on when each service area will go to open procurement will be included in the final plan.

A concerted effort has been made to make the NRFP documents as clear as possible so that there is no confusion about what is being asked of respondents. Efforts have also been made to reduce redundancy in questions and to only include those questions and materials important for identifying a successful service provider.

To alleviate concerns of agencies from outside a service area bidding on services, respondents will be required to identify their experience in providing services within the service area. This will ensure that agencies bidding on services are familiar with the service area in question.

To alleviate concerns with agencies potentially underbidding for contracts, price has been removed from the NRFP and instead, service providers will be required to provide a budget for the service at a pre-determined, fixed amount.

With respect to the length of agreements, the minimal term for contracts will be up to three years represented by a one-year agreement with two, one-year renewal options. The possibility of utilizing longer contracts will continue to be pursued and additional information will be provided when a final decision is confirmed.

Ensuring ongoing service delivery for vulnerable clients remains a primary concern. Where open procurement results in a change of service provider, the Branch will work with both outgoing and incoming service providers on transition plans to mitigate any adverse impacts on clients. We expect the professionalism of the sector will contribute to a positive transition in communities where there is a change in service providers.

BC Bid

All NRFPs will be posted on BC Bid. BC Bid is an electronic posting system where government can post solicitations (RFPs, etc.) and respondents/bidders can download solicitation documents. BC Bid is recognized as a national form of advertising for complying with the Province's legal obligations to

advertise solicitations. The website for BC Bid is www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca. All service providers within a service area will be notified when an NRFP or other solicitation document is posted to BC Bid.

Direct Awards

In limited circumstances, government procurement policy allows the direct awarding of a contract without a competitive process. Direct awards are typically made on one of the following grounds:

- Public Sector Organization – The contract is with another government body;
- Sole Source – The ministry can strictly prove that only one contractor is qualified;
- Emergency – An unforeseeable emergency exists and a competitive process cannot be carried out in time;
- Security and Order – A competitive process would interfere with maintaining security and order;
- Confidentiality – Disclosure could be reasonably expected to compromise government confidentiality, cause economic disruption, or be contrary to the public interest.

Where there are opportunities to direct award, these will be considered. This includes direct awards on the grounds of sole source and public sector organization. In the latter case, contracts to local government for police-based victim services will be direct awarded where the local government is providing cost sharing for the program. Where there is no cost sharing, all options will be examined.

Where a direct award is being considered on the grounds of sole service but the Branch cannot strictly prove that there is only one vendor, the Branch is obligated to post a Notice of Intent (NOI) to direct award on BC Bid. The NOI includes the rationale for why the Branch is direct awarding and provides an opportunity for vendors to object to the NOI in writing, on specific grounds, by a certain date and time.

Timelines and Activities

Because there are over 400 programs to be procured, a multi-year procurement implementation plan will likely be required. Open procurement is expected to begin in some service areas in fiscal 2015/16. For agencies in service areas that are not yet up for procurement, the existing annual application process will be utilized.

As noted earlier, the intention is to procure for all of the services within a service area at the same time. The implementation timeframe will depend on a number of factors including feedback received on this draft plan, the need to balance the number of service areas and programs procured in a given year, the complexity of the service areas being procured and the introduction of any new service areas. The allocation of service areas to specific procurement years will be defined in the final procurement implementation plan.

Tools and Resources

The Branch is committed to ensuring service providers and interested proponents have access to tools and resources to support their participation in any solicitations.

Basic information on government procurement processes can be found in Chapter 6 of the BC Government Core Policy and Procedures Manual available online at www.fin.gov.bc.ca/ocg/fmb/manuals/CPM/CPMtoc.htm.

An excellent webinar for understanding and responding to government procurement processes was developed by the Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI) and is available online at www.sfu.ca/tlcvan/clients/bc_ministry_housing/2011-04-18-19_Ministry_Social_Development_17833/.

Vendor Training for Responding to RFPs

In addition to the above resources, regional vendor training sessions on the subject of responding to RFPs will be provided in advance of each procurement cycle. Additional information about these sessions, including dates and times, will be provided to service providers well in advance of the actual dates.

Submitting Feedback

Throughout the Services to Victims of Crime Initiative the Branch has committed to receiving and incorporating feedback and input received from service providers and other stakeholders from across the province as it moves forward. Feedback received on the draft plan will be carefully considered when finalizing the procurement plan.

To submit feedback on the draft procurement plan, please use the following link:

<http://fluidsurveys.com/s/phase3/>

If you are a contracted service provider, please note that your organization will be provided with a direct invitation to complete the survey on behalf of the organization.

While the survey will take some time to complete, the information gathered is critical to finalizing the procurement plan. The survey is designed so that answers will be anonymous and at no time will comments or feedback be attributed to a specific organization or individual.

If you have any questions about the survey, please email your questions to victimservices@gov.bc.ca with the subject line “Procurement Plan Survey.”

We thank everyone in advance for taking the time to provide us with their comments and feedback and look forward to sharing a finalized plan in the coming months.