

Information bulletin

Victim Services and Crime Prevention

December 2014

We Want to Hear from You!

If you have feedback about this bulletin or would like to submit information about an innovative project to be featured in a future bulletin, please contact us at victimservices@gov.bc.ca.

Please consider the environment before printing this e-bulletin.
Thank you!



Victim Services and
Crime Prevention
Community Safety and
Crime Prevention Branch
Ministry of Justice



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Message from the Executive Director



Welcome to the December 2014 Information Bulletin. This edition covers a variety of topics, from program announcements to grant funding and training opportunities.

Last month we launched the first in a series of free webinars for front-line service providers. Our first webinar on the Restitution Program went well and we're looking forward to our next session on the

Crime Victim Assistance Program in December. See page two for more details. If you have ideas for future webinars please let us know.

This issue contains a program spotlight on the North Okanagan Integrated Case Assessment Team (ICAT), which recently won a regional Premier's Award in the Partnership category. ICATs are a demonstrated effective local response to assisting victims of domestic violence.

This edition also contains answers to the 'top five' questions for the Crime Victim Assistance Program, tips for working with survivors of sexual assault, and information about Civil Forfeiture grants.

Congratulations to BWSS which celebrated their 35th anniversary earlier this month – what an accomplishment! Congratulations also to all of the recipients of this year's Crime Prevention Awards which were held on October 31, 2014.

As we near the holiday season, I'd like to wish you and your family happy holidays and thank you for the important contributions that you have made throughout 2014 in assisting victims of crime and women and children impacted by violence.



Taryn Walsh
Executive Director
Victim Services and Crime
Prevention

Civil Forfeiture Grant Applications Available!

On November 27, 2014, the Province began accepting applications for civil forfeiture grants aimed at addressing violence against women, reducing youth involvement in crime, and serving victims through restorative justice. Applications will be accepted until Jan. 7, 2015, and all grants will be awarded by March 31, 2015.

This funding is available through proceeds from civil forfeiture. Under the Civil Forfeiture Act, property can be forfeited when it has been acquired as a result of unlawful activity, or has been used for unlawful activity. Proceeds from the sale of assets (e.g., houses, cars, or boats) are paid into a special account which can be used for a number of specified purposes, including actions which support the prevention or remediation of crime.

Funds are being distributed by the Civil Forfeiture Office (CFO) in partner-



ship with Victim Services and Crime Prevention (VSCP), Ministry of Justice. Project funding is one-time only in nature.

For more information about the grants and to download the grant applications, please visit [our website](#).

Free Webinars this Fall and Winter

We had the first in a series of free webinars in November 2014 on the Restitution Program. Overall we received very positive feedback indicating that the webinar was useful and informative. We're happy to announce that the video for this webinar is now [posted online](#).

Our second free webinar will take place on Wednesday, December 10. The topic of this webinar is the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) and our host will be Grant McKellar (Director, CVAP). Grant will discuss the "top five" facts to know about CVAP. The registration for webinar is now closed, but we will post a video of the session online soon.

We will be holding upcoming webinars on the following dates:

- February 4, 2015: Court Support



- April 15, 2015: Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

We want to hear from you! The goal of these webinars is to be informative and useful to front-line service providers. If you have a suggestion for a webinar topic please contact us at victimservices@gov.bc.ca.

Call for Proposals to Support Exiting Prostitution

The Government of Canada recently announced new funding over the next five years (2015-2016 to 2019-2020) to complement the recently passed criminal law reforms on prostitution. This funding will be available through the Department of Justice Victims Fund to support those exiting prostitution. \$10.47 million will be made available to support programming to help sellers of sexual services get out of prostitution. Front-line organizations will be considered for funding under a call for proposals. For more information, please see the [Measures to Address Prostitution Initiative](#).

Program Spotlight: North Okanagan ICAT

In December 2008, the Vernon Women's Transition House Society formed a partnership with the Vernon/North Okanagan RCMP to develop a comprehensive safety assessment and planning process for victims of domestic violence. With start-up funding from the Ministry of Justice, the project brought together a number of agencies to create a multi-agency team to improve safety for women and children at the highest risk of harm in domestic violence situations.

In 2010, the North Okanagan Integrated Case Assessment Team (ICAT) was launched and began taking on cases. The ICAT uses a collaborative approach to assess the risk of harm for victims of domestic violence or stalking, and to provide enhanced safety and support to the victim and proactive interventions with the alleged offender.

"ICAT increases safety of men, women, and children that are living in high risk domestic violence situations," says Brooke McLardy (Programs Director, Vernon Women's Transition House Society). "ICAT can assess cases and take a look at the risk factors that are there and help the victim safety plan and mitigate those risk factors. There are also proactive interventions for the offender to give him the support that he may need in order to reduce violence."

The 12 member ICAT team represents nine agencies that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding including the Vernon Women's Transition House Society, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, the Ministry of Child and Family Development, the Vernon/North Okanagan RCMP, Vernon Correction Services Canada, Community Corrections, Interior Health – Mental Health and Addictions, BC Forensic Psychiatry, and RCMP Victim Services. The team meets every two weeks to discuss ongoing and new cases.



Photo: Members of the North Okanagan ICAT

What does an ICAT do?

Case referrals come from a number of sources. Once a case is identified, the referring agency completes a referral form and gets consent from the client. Then the ICAT launches into action.

"That referral form goes over to our RCMP Domestic Violence Unit coordinator," says Brooke. "Then she takes a look at it and calls me and we assess whether we think it's an emergency or whether it can wait until one of our regular meetings."

Every second Wednesday afternoon, the team comes together to discuss cases. For each case that has been referred, the team goes through 19 factors to assess the level of risk.

"Our definition of high risk is risk of serious bodily harm or death," says Brooke. "We take on those cases that we think are going to go over that tipping point. It takes us usually between 45 minutes and an hour to go through a new case to make sure that we have all the information, come to consensus on risk, and to complete a risk management plan for that family."

"Once we've assessed risk is high, we take a look at the factors that are positive. Let's say [the alleged offender] lost his job; he has no money. One of our actions will be to try and get him financially stable. The [Ministry of Social

Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Saturday, December 6 was the Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, an opportunity to consider those women and children affected by violence, and to share ways that we can help prevent violence against women and improve the safety of women and children in our communities. This day marks the anniversary of the murder of 14 young women at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. Please see the [joint statement](#) from the Ministry of Justice and the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence.

North Okanagan ICAT (cont'd)

Development and Social Innovation] worker will go back and start their application process for getting him income assistance. We might identify that her house is very unsafe for her to be living in since he knows the alarm code and how to get in, so we can do a few things. One might be to offer her space at the transition house. An Outreach Services worker might go and do a safety check of the house or they might pull in the RCMP to do the safety assessment and a comprehensive safety plan for her for going to work, going to school, and so on."

ICAT Follow-up

The team typically holds between two and eight open cases at a time until the level of risk for each case declines. The team revises the safety plans for open cases as required.

In the period between team meetings, with particularly active files, there can be a fair amount of communication and coordination between team members.

"If risk is changing, once say, he gets picked up, we want the victim to know," says Brooke. "So, we make sure the victim service worker is in touch with the victim to say, 'he's been picked up; he's been arrested. He's being held overnight. We expect he's going to get released tomorrow.' When the release happens, the same chain happens to make sure that she is fully aware he is in the community. If he's starting to breach orders, then we're in contact with all our services to make sure that we're dialed in with her and that she's aware of what's going on and how to report.

Impacts of ICATs

"We're seeing a higher rate of guilty pleas in court. We're seeing guys who are being held for a few days, which is wonderful because it allows us to get

the safety planning in place. We've seen income assistance come forward in terms of crisis grants and moving grants and things like that to help women increase their safety right away."

Of the nearly 100 cases that the ICAT has worked on in the last five years, there has been only one case of child removal.

"Ninety percent of cases have children," she says. "Children are staying with family members or with mom. That's a huge success because in a lot of other communities, it doesn't operate that way. This allows for much more support instead of intervention."

Another success of the program is the relationships that the ICAT has built with community service providers.

"This team doesn't just benefit those high risk domestic cases, it benefits all our clients," says Brooke. "I know that our Ministry of Justice programs, for instance, can phone any one of our community partners and say, 'Hey, this is what I am dealing with. Is there anything that your service could offer?' We have those really casual relationships now where you have that direct phone number. I know that all of our clients are better served because of those relationships."

Congratulations to the North Okanagan ICAT!

On September 5, 2014 the ICAT received a prestigious regional Premier's Award in the Partnership category. Brooke notes that the team is very pleased.

"That provincial recognition gives some validation for the work we're doing," she says. "It highlights for other people the potential for their own communities to do something like this. After five years of running this service, we can honestly say that it works. It can be done."

Online Training Opportunities



Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training

Seats for staff and volunteers with our Branch-funded programs are still available for the Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training. For more information about the training, please visit our [training page](#).

Understanding and Responding to Elder Abuse E-book and Video

Designed for workers in B.C. who work with older adults who have been abused and neglected. For more information, please visit our [training page](#).

Human Trafficking: Canada is Not Immune

The training provides information about the indicators of human trafficking and ways to meet the unique needs of trafficked persons. For more information about the training, please visit the [OCTIP training webpage](#).

Crime Victim Assistance Program Answers the 'Top Five'

On an annual basis the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) receives approximately 3600 applications for financial benefits each year. Grant McKellar (Director, CVAP), provides answers to the 'top five' questions:

1. What offences do you cover?

In a nutshell we cover "violent" offences. All of the eligible offences are prescribed in schedule 1 of the Crime Victim Assistance Regulation, which is [available online](#).

2. Does the victim need to report the offence to the police?

No. We can accept claims that have not been reported to police. We would ask why the offence was not reported, but we do understand that there may be valid reasons why the victim chose not to report. Although the police report is not required, we still need to have sufficient information to establish that the claimant was a victim of violent crime. We will collect whatever information is available.

3. How long does it take to get a decision on a claim?

Each claim is different. Since we rely on third party information to determine eligibility, such as police reports and medi-

cal reports, it is difficult to estimate how long it will take to process individual claims. On average claims are adjudicated within 54 days, which is a significant improvement from a few years ago.

4. Can a claim be expedited?

Yes. We expedite files when the claimant is in urgent need of benefits, with priority to those whose safety is at imminent risk. We request that the application clearly indicate that urgent services are required and why. Please call us at 604-660-3888 or e-mail cvap@gov.bc.ca regarding any urgent claims.

5. Can you replace personal property that is lost or stolen?

The personal property that we can replace is limited to disability aids, eyeglasses and clothing damaged in the commission of the offence. There is no ability in the legislation to replace cash, cell phones, or repair damage to walls or other property.

If you have any questions about the Crime Victim Assistance Program please call us Monday to Friday 8:30 - 4:30 at 604-660-3888 (toll free at 1-866-660-3888) or email cvap@gov.bc.ca. For more information about CVAP, please visit [our website](#).

Awards Honour Crime Prevention

The Ministry of Justice Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards were held on October 31, 2014 in Burnaby at a luncheon during the BC Crime Prevention Annual Training Symposium. Crime prevention partners from across B.C. were on hand to witness Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Suzanne Anton, present the awards to 17 recipients. The highest honour of the day, the Anthony J. Hulme Award, went to Terry Moist for his more than three decades worth of crime prevention work in North Central Vancouver Island. The



awards were part of Crime Prevention Week (November 1-7). For more information about the awards, please visit [our website](#).

Mary Manning Centre Receives Award



Photo: Sandy Bryce (right) receives award from Phil Tawtel. Photo by Ron Harshman.

On December 4, 2014, Ministry of Justice representatives presented the Mary Manning Centre with the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Award for Community Organization. Sandy Bryce (Executive Director) received the award on behalf of the organization.

Practice Tips: Working with Survivors of Sexual Assault

This article was adapted from WAVAW fact sheet: Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault.

Sexual assault often leaves survivors feeling powerless. It can affect many aspects of a survivor's life including their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Some common feelings survivors have include guilt, shame, fear, depression, anger, loss of trust, etc. A survivor may also be worried about their physical health (STIs, pregnancy, HIV). While some effects of sexual assault are due to the physical assault itself, survivors are also greatly affected by sexual assault myths which often blame survivors for the violence they have experienced. Due to this, many survivors choose not to tell anyone about their assault.

Tips for Providing Support to Survivors:

- Acknowledge the strength and courage it takes the survivor to talk about their experience. Thank them for trusting you with their personal information. Help them find the resources they need. Let the survivor disclose what they are comfortable with. Don't worry if they stop talking for a while, silences are okay.
- Try to contain your own feelings. It's important not to show shock or horror. This may reinforce a person's sense of shame and this may deter them from seeking more support. Supporting the survivor will require you to remain calm and in control of your feelings.
- Reassure them by saying, "it's not your fault." No one ever asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted.
- Avoid questions like "what were you doing there anyways?" As well, try to avoid asking questions using the word "why." Even with the best intentions the question may sound

accusatory to the survivor.

- Be careful about touching (e.g., hugging) the person if they have not initiated the contact. Some people may be upset by physical contact. Always ask permission before making physical contact.
- Help the survivor find existing resources including legal, medical, and/or emotional support.
- Be aware that the person may not hate the offender. They may have very conflicting feelings especially if the offender is a partner, acquaintance, or relative.

[Click here](#) to view WAVAW's full fact



BWSS Holds 35th Anniversary Celebration



Photo by Uche Odoh

On November 25, 2014, Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) held its 35th anniversary celebration in Vancouver at the Terminal City Club. The event was attended by more than 100 invitees, including Jill Krop (emcee), Bif Naked (keynote speaker), as well as the Board of Directors, staff team, original BWSS members, and other special guests.

We'd like to congratulate BWSS on their 35th anniversary and wish them many more.

Services to Victims of Crime Initiative

In May 2014, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch launched the Services to Victims of Crime Initiative, a three phase consultation initiative. Phase One of the initiative began in May with an online survey. There was a good response rate to the survey; more than 83 percent of programs responded. Phase Two involved a series of in-person regional consultation sessions held between October and December 2014.

Sessions were held in eight communities including Cranbrook, Nanaimo, Prince George, Fort St. John, Terrace,

Kelowna, Langley and Vancouver. Lynda Cavanaugh, Assistant Deputy Minister, attended every session along with presenters along Jamie Lipp, Director, and Thomas Taller, Senior Policy Analyst. A report on Phase Two is expected to be distributed to contracted service providers at the end of December. Phase Three of the project will involve the development of a draft procurement plan that will be made available for further consultation in April 2015. For more information about the Services to Victims of Crime Initiative visit [our website](#) or you can contact your Program Manager.

Justice Summit on Violence Against Women

On November 28 and 29, 2014, B.C. held its fourth Justice Summit, which was entitled Better Responses to Violence Against Women. The Summit generated discussion and gathered input on how to collectively improve justice system responses to violence against women, specifically domestic violence and sexual violence. The Summit also focused on the needs of vulnerable populations, such as Aboriginal women, women with

disabilities, women involved in the sex trade, and immigrant and visible minority women.

Three Justice Summits have been held previously. The reports of all three prior summits can be found on the [Justice BC website](#). The report for the fourth Justice Summit regarding Violence Against Women is forthcoming.

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Report on Homicide Released

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics recently released the report "Homicide in Canada, 2013". The national homicide rate decreased eight percent from 2012, the lowest rate since 1966. Manitoba had the highest provincial homicide rate, followed by Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. There were 68 intimate partner homicides in Canada in 2013. The majority (82%) of victims of intimate partner homicides were female.

For more information, please see [the report](#).