



28th Annual Report
2016-2017

Victims Assistance Committee of the
Northwest Territories

June 30, 2017

Dear Minister Sebert:

Victims Assistance Committee (VAC) Annual Report

On behalf of the Victims Assistance Committee, I am pleased to present the 28th Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, thereby meeting our legislative requirement as per section 10 (1) of the *NWT Victims of Crime Act*. I would like to thank you for your ongoing support of the Victims Assistance Committee over this last year.

The membership, funding recommendations, and Ministerial approvals for disbursements from the Victims' Assistance Fund (VAF) for the 2016-2017 fiscal year, and resulting activities supported by the disbursements, are documented in this report.

As the VAC Chairperson, I would like to thank the current two members of the committee, Gladys Macpherson of Fort Smith, and the newest member, Margaret Mercredi of Yellowknife, who provide invaluable input and commitment in reviewing proposals to the Victims Assistance Fund (VAF). The composition of our committee represents the diversity of our territory, and each member brings their knowledge and understanding of their respective regions. As a committee, we represent the NWT and discuss issues and priorities concerning victims, and make funding recommendations to you for your consideration.

The VAC committee mandate is to ensure the best use of the Victims Assistance Fund to directly serve and benefit victims of crime as a whole, rather than individually in the NWT. It is not a compensation fund, nor a restitution fund. The funding is allocated to projects that include: training of members of the public, justice professionals and justice partners; public awareness of the needs and rights of victims under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR) enacted in July of 2015; and projects, programs and events that support the needs of victims.

Family violence and assault are two of the most common referrals received by NWT Victim Services in the Northwest Territories. We know that when crime and tragedy happens in our communities, everyone is impacted. The Victim Assistance Fund can have a significant impact on communities as a whole, and as committee members it gives us a sense of pride to learn about all the great work happening with these funds.

Community non-profit programs apply for additional funding through the Victims Assistance Fund to provide valuable on the land healing and self-care workshops. These include Elders and families sharing traditional knowledge through storytelling, picking medicine, moose hide tanning, and gathering and making food as a community. These programs provide meaningful cultural learning that blends

traditional and contemporary knowledge, and directly help victims and community members heal together.

Many programs focus on building awareness and prevention initiatives within the communities. Elder abuse, family violence, sexual consent, victim-blaming, bullying, cyber bullying and healthy relationships are all common themes.

Events that promote awareness of *Victims & Survivors of Crime Week* happen annually and bring communities out for BBQ's or Feasts. *Family Violence Awareness Week* is an important week across the North. There are many Northerners helping Northerners where ever you go. Assistance provided by this fund has a significant impact on individuals and communities in the Northwest Territories.

Over the last year, this fund has provided very practical and important assistance to family members of victims of homicide. This has filled an important gap of available funding, and additional information on this project can be found further on in this report.

The Committee looks forward to continuing to work with you to raise public awareness about the needs and rights of victims of crime, to reduce and prevent incidences of crime - especially family violence, to support the needs of children who witness crime, to continue to build trusting relationships with the RCMP, and to lessen the effects on victims and their families in the Northwest Territories.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bridget Larocque".

Bridget Larocque, Chairperson

NWT Victims Assistance Committee – Legislation and Terms of Reference

NWT VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT – R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.9 (Supp.) in force April 1, 1989

The NWT *Victims of Crime Act* establishes the Victims Assistance Fund (VAF) and provides for the appointment of a Victims Assistance Committee (VAC).

Definition of “victims” under the *Victims of Crime Act*:

“Victims” means persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including

- (a) physical or mental injury,
- (b) emotional suffering,
- (c) economic loss, or
- (d) substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws or laws that have penal consequences, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted, and includes persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization and, where appropriate, the immediate family or dependants of the direct victims.

VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND (VAF)

The VAF is a special-purpose fund established by the NWT *Victims of Crime Act* (*subsection 11(1)*) with revenue from victim fine surcharges from territorial and federal courts. The VAF supports community-based projects and activities that provide services and assistance to victims of crime including:

- Training to sensitize and inform community resource workers about the needs and circumstances of victims of crime;
- Direct services that assist victims through crisis response, personal support, follow-up assistance, information, and referrals;
- Public awareness and information on the rights and responsibilities of victims, available services, the criminal justice system and its procedures, and any other issues relating to victims of crime;
- Research into the needs and concerns of victims;
- Distribution of victim services information; and,
- Promotion of services for victims.

The VAF does not provide direct financial compensation to individual victims or their families. The VAF mandate does not include funding proposals or projects from private businesses. As this is a revolving fund based on victim of crime surcharges from the NWT and Federal Courts, the amounts vary and available funds are limited at times.

VICTIMS ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE (VAC)

The NWT *Victims of Crime Act* establishes the three-member advisory body appointed by the Minister of Justice under the *Victims of Crime Act* and provides for three-year term appointments of Committee members (section 2(2)), as well as the designation of the Chairperson (section 3).

The Committee has a responsibility to promote:

- courteous and compassionate treatment of victims;
- redress (restitution) for victims for the harm that they have suffered;
- information to a victim about:
 - the progress of the prosecution of the offence in which he or she was a victim,
 - the role of the victim in the court proceeding,
- available social, legal, medical and mental health services and how to access them, and
- reporting the crime and co-operating with law enforcement agencies;
- assistance to victims in bringing their views and concerns to the attention of the court;
- measures to minimize inconvenience to victims and to ensure the safety of victims
- training for police, health, social service and other personnel as to the needs and concerns of victims; and
- research about services to victims and the needs and concerns of victims;
- making recommendations to the Minister on:
 - disbursements from the Victims Assistance Fund;
 - the development of policies respecting services to victims; and
 - any other matter that the Minister may refer to the Committee
 - making an annual report of Committee activities

The committee's objective is to support comprehensive community services including, but not limited to, victim support, information and assistance, coordination of criminal justice and community justice interventions, and training in best practices of staff and/or volunteers in how to best meet the needs of victims.

Where a full-service agency is not feasible, the committee supports innovative and community-based workshops, events, and projects to provide support to victims of crime and to raise awareness in the community of the impact of crime on victims.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND RECRUITMENT:

One new regular committee member was appointed in this fiscal year: Ms. Margaret Mercredi of Yellowknife. Ms. Mercredi brings with her a depth of experience with community health and wellness, and an understanding of traditional culture.

Victims’ Assistance Committee (VAC) Members Appointment Detail:

Member	Appointed	Term Ends
Bridgette Larocque Inuvik Chair – active	1 August 2008 Reappointed as of: 1 st of August 2014 for a 3 year term	Ends: 31 July 2017 Request for reappointment as Member and Chair in process
Gladys Macpherson of Fort Smith Member - active	12 April 2012 Reappointed as of: 8 th of May 2015 for a 3 year term	Ends: 7 May 2018
Margaret Mercredi of Yellowknife Member - active	19 January 2017 Reappointed as of: 3 rd of February 2017 for a 3 year term	Ends: 18 January 2020

APPENDICES:

A Statement of Revenues & Expenditures representing VAF activity for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year is referenced in Appendix “A”.

A Statement and Description of VAF Proposal Disbursements for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year is referenced in Appendix “B”.

Appendix "A"

A Statement of Revenues & Expenditures representing Victims Assistance Funding (VAF) Activity for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year

April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017

Revenue	Amount
Victim Fine Surcharges – Territorial/Federal – Fund 19	
Opening Balance from 2016-2017	\$ 164,324.41
Total Revenue	\$159,659.32
Total Disbursements	(\$122,842.80)
2016-2017 Total Fund 19	\$201,140.93
BALANCE FORWARD	\$201,140.93

Appendix "B"

A Statement and Description of Victims Assistance Fund (VAF) Proposal Disbursements for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year

The Victims' Assistance Fund continues to support community initiatives that directly benefit victims of crime and their families and communities through:

- **Projects:** various projects, programs, public promotion/awareness, activities and events; and,
- **Research & Training:** the participation of Victim Services workers and justice partners in research projects, training, conferences and knowledge exchanges to better meet the diverse needs and rights of victims of crime and their families

Disbursements from the Victims Assistance Fund in 2016 - 2017 totalled \$108,286.00

Fort Smith Métis Council-Fort Smith Victim Services: Total Approved: \$15,000.00

Public Information/Awareness/Promotion:

1. National Victims of Crime Awareness Week Activities: Approved: \$15,000.00

The funds were for the purchase of promotional items to strengthen public awareness about the Fort Smith Victim Services program and crime prevention during National Victims of Crime Awareness Week - 2016. Many youth and families came out to enjoy the events.

Inuvik Justice Committee - Inuvik Victim Services/Beaufort Delta Victim Services:

Total Approved: \$12,822.00

Training and Development:

1. Trauma/Violence Prevention Training (Inuvik Women's Group) - January 2015, the Inuvik Victim Services began the Inuvik Women's Group to provide a safe supportive place that empowers women in the Community. Women learn about Healthy Relationships, on the job training and how to repair

things around their homes. The Victim Assistance Funding of \$ **4,137.00** was used to provide the Trauma / Violence Prevention Training.

2. Trauma/Violence Prevention Training (Aklavik Women's Group) – December 2016, the Inuvik Victim Services began the Aklavik Women's Group as the Inuvik Women's Group was such a success. As with the sister group the intention is to provide a safe supportive place that empowers women in the Community. Women learn about Healthy Relationships, on the job training and how to repair things around their homes. The Victim Assistance Funding of \$ **8,685.00** was used to provide the Trauma / Violence Prevention Training.

Native Women's Association of the NWT: Total Approved: \$64,520.80

Public Information/Awareness/Promotion:

1. Supporting Families of Victims of Homicide: Approved: **\$47,800.00**

The funds were to provide support to families (secondary victims) of victims of homicide to attend the full trial of the accused. This can be a significant cost for family members and there are no other available funds that can be accessed. This funding is intended to support the healing process of all NWT families who have experienced the tragedy of death of a family member by homicide.

Training and Development:

1. Two Yellowknife Victim Services Workshops: Approved: **\$16,720.80**

During National Victims & Survivors of Crime Week Victim Services Providers from across the Northwest Territories and partnering agencies were invite to participate in two workshops: one on Strategic Planning to Support Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls; the second workshop was to learn about the implications of Victim Blaming.

Status of Women Council of the NWT - Total Approved: \$30,500.00

Public Information/Awareness/Promotion:

1. Comfort Bags for Children Fleeing Violence and Victim Services Kits were provided to all five community Shelters located in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk and Hay River. There were 120 Women and 240 children

assisted with these items. This funding was in collaboration with Department of Health and Social Services, RCMP and Literacy Council: Approved: **9,000.00**

2. Promote National Family Violence Awareness Week activities in 23 NWT communities (Gameti, Fort Resolution, Fort McPherson, Wrigley, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Deline, Hay River, Tulita, Hay River Reserve, Fort Smith, Lutsel k'e, Inuvik, Fort Good Hope, Tsiigehtchic, Yellowknife, Aklavik.). This was a Territorial wide project with many community activities that built on previous years work. A new booklet "Healthy Relationships and Consent" was developed: Approved: **\$21,500.00**

INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING PROPOSAL APPLICATIONS

Proposals for either type of proposal can be submitted in fillable online documents that are on the website of the Department of Justice-Community Justice & Policing-Victim Services links below. Proposals can also be mailed through Canada Post, or delivered in person to the Community Justice & Policing Division of the GNWT Department of Justice, 5th Floor, Courthouse in Yellowknife.

For "Application Guidelines" for both types of proposals:

<http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/VictimServices/documents/VAFFundingGuidelines.pdf>

For "Project, Event, Activity, or Program Applications":

http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/pdf/VictimsServices/victim_project.pdf

For "Training & Development Applications":

http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/pdf/VictimsServices/victim_training.pdf

Mailing Address:

Community Justice & Community Policing Division
5th Floor, Courthouse
4903 – 49th Street
PO Box 1320
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 2L9

Contact Person for More Information:

Coordinator, NWT Victim Services
Community Justice & Community Policing Division, Department of Justice
Tel: 867-767-9261 ext. 82217 or ext. 82214 or Fax: 867-873-0199