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# uristat

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics



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## Victim services in Canada, 2005/2006

by Jodi-Anne Brzozowski

### Highlights

- According to the Victim Services Survey, there were over 400,000 victims of crime who sought assistance from victim service agencies between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006.
- Based on a one-day snapshot of more than 8,000 victims that were helped by victim service agencies, almost three-quarters of these victims had experienced a crime against the person such as a sexual or physical assault, while the remainder were victims of other crimes such as arson, property crimes and traffic offences. Nearly seven in ten victims who sought assistance were females.
- Among the 697 victim service agencies and 8 criminal injuries compensation programs that responded to the survey, a large proportion were police-based (42%), followed by community-based (19%), sexual assault centres (17%), court-based agencies (8%), Ontario's Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services (7%) and system-based agencies (7%). The remaining 1% comprised criminal injuries compensation programs.
- Services most often offered directly by victim service agencies were: general information (96%), emotional support (95%), liaising with other agencies on behalf of the client (90%), immediate safety planning (90%), information on criminal justice system structure and process (89%) and public education/prevention (87%).
- Almost half (45%) of the agencies reported targeting specialized populations. Families of sexually abused children were most commonly targeted (70%), followed by adult victims of sexual assault (67%), and child or youth victims of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation (65%).
- The cost of providing formal services to victims of crime in Canada in 2005/2006, based on responses from 628 victim service agencies (excluding compensation programs), totaled \$152.2 million.



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## Introduction

Until recently, there were no nationally available data on the number and types of victim service agencies in Canada. In an effort to fill this information gap, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), with funding from Justice Canada's Policy Centre for Victim Issues, conducted its first national survey of victim services in 2003. Recognizing the need to monitor the number and types of victim service agencies and to address emerging issues in the field of victim services, the Victim Services Survey (VSS) was repeated in 2005/2006.

This *Juristat* presents the findings from the second survey,<sup>1</sup> including the characteristics of victims who seek assistance from victim service agencies as well as the facilities and types of services that are provided to victims of crime.

## Profile of victims served

### Over 400,000 victims served in 2005/2006<sup>2</sup>

There were over 400,000 victims of crime who sought assistance from the 589 victim service agencies that provided annual counts between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006. Among those agencies that were able to provide a breakdown of annual counts, there were 161,000 female victims and 48,000 male victims. The sex was not reported for 190,000 victims.

### Majority of victims served on April 19, 2006 were victims of violent crime<sup>3</sup>

The VSS also captured information on the characteristics of victims seeking formal services on a specific snapshot day. On April 19, 2006, 8,080 victims were served by 636 agencies.<sup>4</sup> Among these victims, 72% were victims of violent crime such as sexual and physical assaults. Research suggests that victims of violent crimes suffer more debilitating and psychological effects (Sims et al., 2006) and are thus more likely to turn to formal sources of support such as victim service agencies (Stohr, 2005).

Another 24% of clients had experienced other types of incidents such as property crimes, other *Criminal Code* offences, or non-criminal incidents such as: suicides, drownings or motor vehicle collisions. The type of crime or incident experienced was unknown for 4% of victims served on snapshot day (Table 1).

### The majority of victims served on snapshot day were females

Over two-thirds (68%) of victims who sought assistance on April 19, 2006 were female. This proportion is similar to what was found in 2002/2003. The high representation of females may be related to the fact that female victims in general are more likely to use formal support services than their male counterparts (AuCoin and Beauchamp, 2007).

### Over half of female victims of violent offences served by agencies experienced violence at the hands of their spouse

Agencies reporting that their clients had been victims of sexual assaults and other violent offences were also asked to specify the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator. Among the more than 5,200 victims of these offences, 47% had experienced violence by a spouse, ex-spouse or intimate partner, 26% had been victimized by a family member other than a spouse, and the remaining 27% of victims were victimized by a non-family member (e.g. friend, neighbour, acquaintance or a stranger).

There were differences between the sexes when considering the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator. Among female victims for which the relationship of the perpetrator was known, 53% were victims of spousal violence, 24% had been victimized by a family member other than a spouse, and the remaining 23% had

**Text box 1**

**Recent legislative and policy reforms and initiatives addressing the needs of victims of crime**

**Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime, 2003**

The Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime was revised in 2003 and endorsed by the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice. The Principles are intended to promote fair treatment of victims and should be reflected in federal/provincial/territorial laws, policies and procedures. The Principles emphasize that victims should be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect; the importance of safeguarding victim privacy and safety; the consideration of victim diversity in the delivery of programs, services, education and training; and victims' right to information.

**Victims Fund<sup>5</sup>**

The Policy Centre for Victim Issues, Department of Justice Canada administers the Victims Fund. The objectives of the Victims Fund include: promoting access to justice and participation in the justice system and the development of law, policies and programs; promoting implementation of principles, including *Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime* and guidelines and law designed to address the needs of victims and articulate their role in the criminal justice system; contribute to increased knowledge and awareness about the impact of victimization and the needs of victims, available services, assistance and programs and legislation; promote government and non-governmental organization involvement in the identification of victim needs and gaps in services and in the development and delivery of programs, services and assistance to victims; and to provide emergency financial assistance to victims of crime in extraordinary circumstances, victims who wish to attend National Parole Board (NPB) hearings of the offender who harmed them (see below), and Canadians victimized abroad (see below).

The provinces and territories, which are responsible for the majority of victim services, are the primary recipients of funding from the Victims Fund, including many enhancements to the Fund announced in 2007. Provinces and territories are eligible for project funding for specific objectives, such as: funds to assist with the implementation of victim legislation; funds to provide financial assistance to victims who wish to attend sentencing hearings to present victim impact statements; funds to enhance or expand services to currently underserved victims; as well as emergency funds to assist victims in the territories. However, other components of the Fund are available to educational institutions, not-for-profit agencies and organizations, band and tribal councils, international organizations of which Canada is a member, and provincial, territorial, municipal and regional Canadian governments can apply to the Fund.

**Financial assistance for victims to attend National Parole Board hearings**

In November 2005, the Victims Fund was enhanced to defray the costs for registered victims who wish to attend National Parole Board (NPB) hearings of the offender who harmed them. The assistance is provided to cover travel, hotel and meal expenses. Any victim who wishes to attend

a NPB hearing must register with the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) or the NPB. Once NPB approval for the victim to attend the hearing is received, funding can be made available to victims. The victim must attend the hearing to receive the funds. In 2007 this Fund was enhanced to include the costs for a victim support person. Between November, 2005 and March, 2007, 509 people received financial assistance to attend NPB hearings.

**Emergency financial assistance for Canadians victimized abroad**

In 2007, the Victims Fund was enhanced to provide limited financial assistance to Canadians who are victims of serious violent crime abroad, who may incur unanticipated or exceptional expenses resulting from their victimization, and where no other source of funding is available. The types of crimes eligible for emergency financial assistance are: Homicide, sexual assault, aggravated assault, assault with serious personal violence, including against a child.

**Establishment of National Office for Victims, Public Safety Canada**

Established in November 2005, the National Office for Victims complements several existing federal services and is a central resource for victims of offenders under federal responsibility. Established within the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to better meet the needs of victims of offenders under federal supervision, the NOV provides general information for victims and the public as well as referrals to the Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board for specific enquiries. The NOV also provides a victim's perspective in national Public Safety, CSC and NPB policy development. In addition, the office responds to complaints about the services provided to victims by the CSC and the NPB, once all existing avenues for complaint have been exhausted. The office is co-located with the Department of Justice's Policy Centre for Victim Issues that is mandated to coordinate federal initiatives for victims of crime and to ensure that the perspectives of victims of crime are considered in the development of policy and law reform

**Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime**

In 2007, the Office for the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime was created and announced by the Ministers of Justice and Public Safety. The mandate of the Ombudsman is to:

1. Facilitate access of victims to existing federal programs and services by providing them with information and referrals;
2. Address complaints of victims about compliance with the provisions of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* that apply to victims of offenders under federal supervision;
3. Promote awareness of the needs and concerns of victims and the applicable laws that benefit victims of crime, including to promote the principles set out in the *Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime* with respect to matters of federal jurisdiction;
4. Identify emerging issues and explore systemic issues that impact negatively on victims of crime.

a non-family relationship to the perpetrator. In contrast, 49% of males were victimized by a non-family member, 28% were victimized by a family member other than a spouse, and 23% had experienced violence at the hands of a spouse, ex-spouse or intimate partner.

**Profile of Canada's victim service agencies**

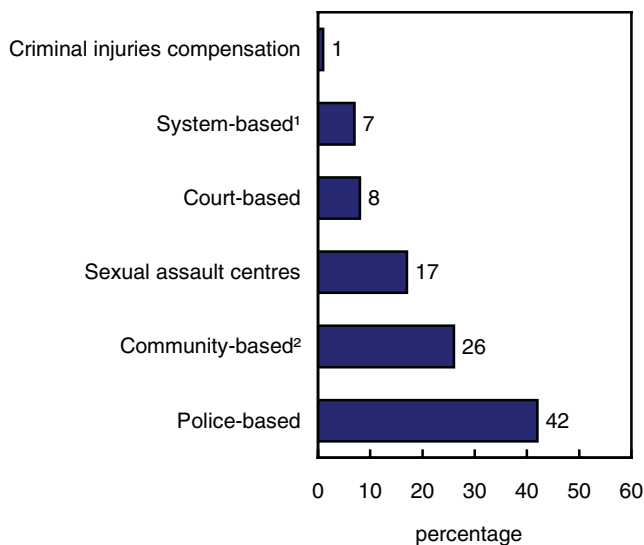
According to the 2005/2006 VSS, in the year ending March 31, 2006, there were 830 victim service agencies and 9 criminal injuries compensation programs that were identified as providing formal services to victims of crime through the survey. Survey responses were received from 697 victim service agencies and 8 criminal injuries compensation/financial benefit programs.<sup>6</sup> A large proportion of victim service agencies were police-based

(42%), followed by community-based (19%), sexual assault centres (17%), court-based agencies (8%), Ontario's Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services (7%) and system-based agencies (7%). The remaining 1% comprised criminal injuries compensation programs<sup>7,8,9,10</sup> (figure 1).

The cost of providing formal services to victims of crime in Canada in 2005/2006, based on responses from 628 victim service agencies (excluding compensation programs), totaled \$152.2 million.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1

**Four out of ten victim service agencies are police-based**



1. Services under this model assist victims throughout their contact with the criminal justice system from the police right through to the corrections stage. This model can be characterized as "one-stop" service delivery.
2. Includes Ontario Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral agencies which are community-based, but work directly with the police.

**Note:** Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Victim Services Survey, 2005/2006.

**Rural and urban areas served by two-thirds of agencies**

According to the 2005/2006 VSS, 69% of agencies reported serving rural areas, 67% reported serving urban areas and 29% reported serving reserves. Three percent of agencies reported being physically located on a reserve. While agencies may serve rural and urban areas as well as reserves, the geographic isolation of rural areas may reduce access to a variety of services (Purdon, 2004; Lunn, 2001).

**General information and emotional support most commonly provided services**

In an effort to be responsive to the various needs of victims of crime, Canada's victim service agencies offer a broad range of services, either directly or by referral to other agencies (Table 2). Research that has focused on determining the most frequently identified needs of those who use victim services most often points to the need for information and support (Prairie Research Associates, 2005; Wemmers and Canuto, 2002; Sims, 1999). The VSS found that the most commonly reported services offered by agencies were directly related to these needs. For example, the most frequent types of assistance provided directly by victim service agencies<sup>12</sup> were general information (96%), emotional support (95%), liaising with other agencies on behalf of the client (90%), immediate safety planning (90%), information on criminal justice system structure and process (89%) and public education/prevention (87%).

Not all victim service agencies can offer the specific services that their clients require, thus it is not uncommon to see networks form between agencies. According to the survey, 688 of the 697 reporting agencies had established some type of working relationship with other agencies. The most common partnerships were with the police (98%), other victim assistance agencies (98%), transition homes or shelters (90%), social services (89%) and other government agencies (85%).

Some of the most commonly reported factors that have promoted the use of inter-agency partnerships include: maximizing effective referrals (95%); improving the range and accessibility of services to victims (95%); coordinating services (93%); and sharing resources (90%).

**Text box 2  
Victims' use of services**

There is a wealth of research that points to the fact that many victims do not turn to formal agencies such as the police or victim services (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005; Sims et al., 2005; Sims, 1999). According to the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, 33% of violent victimization incidents were reported to the police and only 9% of violent victimizations resulted in the victim seeking help from a formal agency, such as victim services and crisis lines, counselors or psychologists, or community or family centres (Gannon and Mihorean, 2005). Furthermore, in only 1% of violent incidents did the victim seek support specifically from a victim service agency.

Victims of spousal violence were more likely than victims of non-spousal violent crimes to make use of formal services. More than one-third (34%) of victims of spousal violence used a type of formal service. The most common services used by spousal violence victims were counsellors or psychologists (28%), crisis centres or crisis lines (12%) and community centres or family centres (9%). For those who chose not to use formal services, the main reasons cited by both women and men were that they did not want or need help from a social service agency (48% and 55% respectively); and, the incident was too minor (21% of women and 29% of men).



**Text box 3**

**Types of victim service agencies in Canada**

According to the VSS, 61% of agencies were government agencies offering direct or contracted services to victims of crime and 39% identified themselves as non-government/community-based organizations.<sup>13,14</sup> The various types of victim services agencies are described below:

**Police-based:** victim services that are offered by a federal, provincial or municipal police service.

**Court-based victim/witness assistance program:** these programs are specifically mandated to provide support services for individuals who have become involved in the court process as either victims or witnesses of crimes. They generally provide information, assistance and referrals with the goal of making the court process less intimidating. Types of services provided may include court orientation, preparation and accompaniment, updates on progress of the case, coordination of meetings with the Crown, assessment of children's ability to testify, etc. Programs can be geared toward specific clientele such as children or victims of domestic violence.

**Community-based victim/witness assistance program:** not-for-profit organizations throughout Canada that participate in the delivery of a victim and/or witness assistance program. Quebec's crime victims assistance centres, commonly referred to as CAVACs, would be classified as this type of victim service agency.

**Sexual assault/rape crisis centre or hospital-based sexual assault treatment centre:** mandated to exclusively serve victims of recent or historical sexual assault. Sexual assault/rape crisis centres often have 24-hour crisis telephone lines and are community-based, not-for-profit agencies. Hospital-based sexual assault centres consist of a team of nurses and physicians that are on call 24 hours, 7 days a week through the emergency department so that victims of a sexual assault can receive specialized medical and emotional care.

**Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service:** specific to Ontario, these agencies are a community-based, non-government service that work closely with the police. They provide on-scene and short-term assistance to victims of crime and other traumatic events and make referrals to community services for longer-term assistance.

**Other community-based:** any other non-government, not-for-profit agencies not listed above that provide direct services to victims of crime and are funded in whole or in part by the provincial/territorial and/or

federal government. For the purpose of this survey, transition homes are excluded because Statistics Canada's Transition Home Survey already collects information from them.

**System-based:** models of service delivery for victims of crime that are independent from police, courts and crown attorneys and assist victims throughout their contact with the criminal justice system. System-based agencies also serve clients who choose not to involve the criminal justice system. These models of service are found in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba, where they are administered by the provincial governments.

**Criminal Injuries Compensation Programs:** programs that provide monetary awards and benefits to victims of crime to help ease the financial hardship incurred as a result of their victimization and to assist them in healing from physical injury or psychological trauma. Such programs are normally governed by legislation that outlines eligibility criteria and by guidelines for decision-making.

**Other financial benefits programs:** programs other than Criminal Injury Compensation Programs that are designated to pay for specific services for victims of crime, e.g. professional counseling, transportation to hearings, and paying for independent legal counsel to respond to applications by defense counsel to open counseling, therapeutic or medical records in cases of sexual assault.

**Victim notifications through the Correctional Service of Canada:** The Correctional Service of Canada's responsibility in regards to victims of federal offenders is as an information provider. Victims are entitled to be provided with the offender's name, the offence and court that convicted him or her, the start date and length of his or her sentence, and the offender's eligibility and review dates for temporary absences, day parole and full parole. If the victim's interest outweighs any invasion of the offender's privacy, further information can be provided, such as the name of the penitentiary where the offender is being held, conditions on and location of his or her release, and the date of the offender's National Parole Board hearing. Victims must request the information since it is not automatically communicated to them.

**Victim information and attendance at National Parole Board hearings:** Similar to the Correctional Service of Canada, the National Parole Board provides victims with information regarding the person who harmed them and also allows victims to make presentations at parole hearings.

## Serving the needs of Canada's diverse population

Canada's population is characterized by its diversity. Being able to take this diversity into account may lead to the development and implementation of specialized programs or services that respond to victims in a way that reflects their diversity, whether they are differentiated by their age, sex, culture, language, sexuality, or physical or mental disabilities.

One way of meeting the needs of victims that has been identified is to target specialized populations (Stohr, 2005). Almost half (45%) of agencies that responded to the survey reported targeting specialized populations.<sup>15</sup> Among those populations most commonly targeted, 70% of agencies targeted families of sexually abused children, 67% targeted adult victims of sexual assault, and 65% targeted child or youth victims of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

### Many agencies offer specialized programs

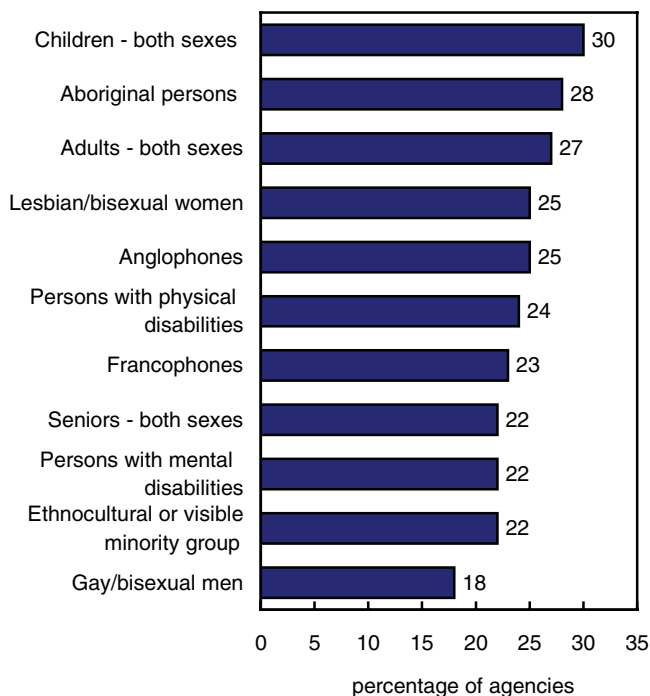
The VSS also asked agencies if they provided specific programs that were dedicated to certain segments of the population. Forty-three percent of agencies reported having such programs.

The most common groups to receive service through a dedicated program were children or youth (30% of agencies), followed by Aboriginal people (28%) and adult victims (27%) (figure 2).

Dedicated programs for other specialized groups such as visible minorities, homosexual or bisexual victims, seniors, and victims with disabilities were also available from a number of agencies. According to the VSS, 22% of victim service agencies had programs for ethnocultural or visible minority groups. Agencies most often delivered dedicated services to Black (African, Jamaican, Haitian), 20%, and Latin American, 18%, visible minority groups.

Figure 2

**Agencies offering specific programs often focus on children or youth**



**Note:** Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.  
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Victim Services Survey, 2005/2006.

In addition, results from the VSS show that 25% of agencies reported having programs for lesbian or bisexual women and 18% reported having programs for gay or bisexual men. Twenty-two percent of agencies offered programs dedicated to senior victims (aged 65 years and older), 24% offered programs for those with physical disabilities and 22% to victims with mental disabilities.

While certain agencies may not offer dedicated programs, they may have resources to help victims who speak languages other than English or French. Twenty-four percent of agencies<sup>16</sup> reported that they had staff or volunteers who were able to speak at least one Aboriginal language. The other most common languages spoken by staff or volunteers were Spanish (20%), German (19%) and Italian (10%).

Agencies most commonly made available audio or visual resource materials in: Aboriginal languages<sup>17</sup> (21%), Chinese (21%), Punjabi (20%) and Hindi (17%).

**Majority of agencies are able to help clients with physical or mental health issues**

The majority of agencies surveyed (92%) indicated that they were able to accommodate clients with mobility impairments, with 89% reporting having at least one wheelchair-accessible building entrance.

Of the 461 agencies that were able to accommodate clients with hearing impairments, the most common methods used were: sign language (66%), teletypewriter or telephone device for deaf (29%), and other services (11%).

Furthermore, 455 agencies reported being able to accommodate clients with visual impairments, either through: large print material (34%), other services (19%) or Braille (8%).<sup>18</sup>

Eighty-one percent of agencies reported being able to provide assistance to clients with mental health issues. Of these 565 agencies, 92% relied on partnerships or assistance from other specialized or professional agencies, 68% used informal assistance such as a family member, friend or caregiver to meet the needs of victims with mental health issues, and 52% used trained staff members.<sup>19</sup>

**Profiling Canada’s victim service providers**

For 2005/2006, 662 victim service agencies (95%) reported the equivalent of nearly 1,800 paid full-time staff having worked that year, representing an average of almost 3 staff members per agency.<sup>20</sup> Victim service agencies rely heavily on volunteers. Almost eight in ten victim service agencies used the services of nearly 9,000 volunteers each between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006. These volunteers worked an average of 4 hours per week during this period, the equivalent of 912 full-time volunteers.

Being able to provide service to victims of crime often requires high levels of education and/or specialized training. About two-thirds (66%) of agencies reported that their minimum educational requirements for employees was a university or college degree, diploma or certificate. Requirements were less stringent for volunteers, with 8% of agencies reporting that their minimum educational requirements for volunteers was a university degree or college diploma.

Due to the scope and nature of the work of victim service agencies, the decision to recruit an employee may be based not only on educational qualifications, but also on the completion of certified workshops, seminars, or professional skills training directly related to the delivery of victim services. Seven in ten agencies (71%) reported having requirements such as these for the recruitment/staffing of employees.

Nearly all agencies (93%) reported delivering some type of training to their employees. The most commonly administered types of training were related to professional skills (94%), orientation training for new employees (94%) and awareness training for new or existing policies or practices (93%).

Over two-thirds of agencies offered training to their volunteers (68%). The most frequently delivered training sessions for volunteers were related to orientation (95%), followed by awareness training (92%) and professional skills training (88%).

### Impacts on service delivery

There are a number of factors that can have an impact on the delivery of service such as changes in legislation, funding or programs. Agencies that responded to the survey were asked to indicate whether certain events that had occurred over the previous two years had an impact on the demand for service from their agency. One-third of agencies found that their caseloads increased because of a change in partnerships with other programs and a similar proportion reported that traumatic or high profile events in the community increased their caseloads.

Changes in funding can also have an impact on service delivery as it affects agencies' abilities to hire staff and develop programs. Nearly three in ten agencies (27%) reported increases in financial resources while 11% said that their financial resources decreased.

Amendments to and implementation of laws generally had little impact on service delivery, but when there was an impact, it was usually in the form of an increase in caseloads. Changes in provincial legislation led to an increase in the caseload of 10% of agencies, while similar proportions of agencies reported increases in their caseload due to changes to federal legislation such as the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, and the *Criminal Code*. Changes to federal legislation also led to changes in the profile of agencies' clientele.

### Criminal injuries compensation programs and other financial benefit programs<sup>21</sup>

According to the VSS, during fiscal year 2005/2006, nine provinces had compensation programs for victims of crime, and responses were received for eight of the nine.<sup>22</sup> The aim of compensation programs is to alleviate the financial burden victims of crime and their families can incur as a result of the incident (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2007). Each program is established according to its respective provincial legislative authority and is administered either by the ministry responsible for victim services or a compensation board.

While there are variations across the provinces in terms of eligibility criteria, in general the programs are available to the victim of a criminal offence (usually violent crimes), family members or dependants of persons who lost their life, and persons who are injured or killed while trying to assist a police officer or while preventing or attempting to prevent a crime (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2007; US Department of Justice, 2005).

The eight criminal injuries compensation programs that responded to the VSS reported a total of 11,437 applications that were adjudicated or concluded during 2005/2006 and another 14,747 that were carried forward to the following fiscal year. Of the total adjudicated, 75% were allowed or granted and 18% were disallowed. The remaining 8% of applications had another status, such as decision pending, withdrawn or abandoned by the applicant.

Seven reporting agencies indicated paying a total of \$93.2 million in compensation for victims of crime in 2005/2006.<sup>23</sup> The largest proportion of this total was paid out for pain and suffering (44%), followed by lost wages (23%), and medical/rehabilitation/dental/eyewear costs (20%). The remaining 13% of compensation monies were allotted for other reasons such as child maintenance, counseling costs and funeral and burial costs.

Based on a subset of just over 6,600 applications that were accepted, 58% were for female victims, and 42% were for male victims.<sup>24</sup> Over three-quarters (76%) of applicants were over the age of 18.

When looking at all accepted applications, the majority of applicants (96%) were victims of crimes against the person. Among those victims, the most common types of crimes were assault (40%), sexual assault (20%), and assaults with a weapon or causing bodily harm (18%). Four percent of applicants were victims of other crimes such as arson, other property crimes and traffic offences.

## The role of Canada's correctional system in serving victims

Canada's criminal justice system also plays a role in providing direct service to crime victims, once their perpetrators have been admitted into the correctional system, either through funding for victims to attend parole board hearings or through the provision of information on offender status within the correctional system. The VSS does not collect information on these services, however, data are available through the Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board.

### Victim notifications through the Correctional Service of Canada<sup>25</sup>

During fiscal year 2005/2006, Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) had just under 4,600 victims registered to receive notification. At the end of the fiscal year, 97% of victims had successfully been contacted. CSC provided victims with 17,276 disclosures<sup>26</sup> of information for a total of 32,895 items of information. Almost one in five (19%) disclosures included information on escorted temporary absences, 14% on statutory release, 13% on day parole and 12% included information on full parole.

### Victim information and attendance at National Parole Board hearings<sup>27</sup>

Regarding the provision of information to victims, the NPB reported 16,711 contacts with victims for this purpose in 2005/2006, an increase of 8% over the previous 12-month period. The number of contacts with victims has increased 19% in the last five years and 500% in the last thirteen years. Most were victims of violence, such as sexual assault, or the family of murder victims.



Between July 1, 2001, when the recommendation to allow oral presentations at NPB hearings was implemented, and March 31, 2006, there were 700 presentations by victims at 474 NPB hearings. In 2005/2006, victims made 169 presentations at 111 hearings. Of this group, most were family members of victims of murder (33%) or manslaughter (25%). Victims made 78% of the presentations in-person, and the rest were on either audiotape/CD or videotape/DVD.

Since the implementation in November 2005 of the financial assistance fund for victims to attend NPB hearings administered by the Department of Justice up to October 2006, there was nearly a 50% increase in the number of hearings at which victims made presentations. Furthermore, the number of victims who made in-person presentations at these hearings more than doubled within this time period.

## Methodology

This is the second cycle for the Victim Services Survey, which is funded by Justice Canada's Policy Centre for Victim Issues. It was developed in consultation with federal, provincial and territorial ministries responsible for justice and victim services, and with a number of victim service agencies from across Canada. The objectives of the survey are to provide a profile of victim service agencies, information on the types of services offered, and some insight into the clients who use them through a snapshot of clients served on April 19, 2006. In addition, the survey collects standardized information from criminal injuries compensation and other financial benefit programs regarding applications for compensation and awards for victims of crime.

Victim services are defined as agencies that provide direct services to primary or secondary victims of crime and are funded in whole or in part by a ministry responsible for justice matters. The survey covered system-based, police-based, court-based and community-based agencies, sexual assault centres, criminal injuries compensation programs and other financial benefit programs.

The Victim Services Survey is a mail-out/mail-back paper questionnaire and is intended to be a census of all victim service agencies that fall within its scope. Although it was intended that each service location complete one form, for administrative reasons, some lead agencies submitted one form representing data for all service locations under their administration. Of the 839 agencies eligible to respond, 396 forms were received representing data for 697 agencies and 8 criminal injuries compensation/financial benefit schemes. This resulted in a response rate of 84%. Of those deemed ineligible to respond, the majority were either closed or outside the scope of the survey.

When looking at provincial and territorial response rates, five provinces and territories had response rates of 100%: Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Yukon and Nunavut. Agencies in Manitoba

had the next highest response rate at 93%, followed by Saskatchewan (90%), Ontario (88%), Nova Scotia (87%), the Northwest Territories (83%), Alberta (81%), Quebec (78%) and British Columbia (74%).

It is important to note that comparisons with the overall number of agencies and response rates between cycles is not recommended. This is in part due to changes to the current year's questionnaire, which allowed agencies to report whether they were responding on behalf of more than one location. This question was not asked during the first survey cycle, therefore, an agency might have represented more than one location last cycle but was recorded as being a single agency.

For the first cycle of the survey, this method of responding also affected the reliability of information regarding areas served by the victim service agencies. The survey asked respondents to indicate the areas they serve (i.e. urban/suburban, rural/village and/or reserve) and whether or not they were located on a reserve. However, when one form represented a number of service agencies each potentially serving different types of geographies, it was not possible to distinguish which agency served which types of geographic area and the number of agencies located on a reserve. As a result, the questionnaire was modified for this cycle to allow agencies reporting on behalf of other locations to provide a breakdown of areas served by each location.

## Endnotes

1. The 2005/2006 Victim Services Survey identified 830 victim service agencies and 9 criminal injuries compensation programs as providing formal services to victims of crime. Responses were received from 697 victim service agencies and 8 criminal injuries compensation programs. The findings in this report are based on the agencies who responded to the survey. Some agencies did not respond to certain survey questions as the information was either unavailable or not applicable to their agency. Throughout the report, it is indicated when responses are based on a number of agencies that is smaller than the total.
2. Of the 697 agencies, 85% were able to provide annual counts for 2005/2006, 9% reported that they had no counts available and 7% did not indicate whether they could provide annual counts. Figures do not add to 100% due to rounding.
3. In order to capture more details on the profile of clients served by victim service agencies, the survey asked agencies about the age, sex and type of victimization experienced by the victims they served.
4. Snapshot day data were unavailable for 61 agencies.
5. For further information on the Victims Fund, visit the Department of Justice website at: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/voc/funding.html>.
6. The survey defines a victim as a primary or secondary victim of crime. Primary victims are those who were the direct target of the crime and secondary victims are those who were not the direct target of the offence but who were affected by it (e.g. family members, friends, classmates, etc.).
7. Figures do not add to 100% due to rounding.
8. See Text box 3: "Types of victim service agencies in Canada" for a description of types of agencies.
9. One agency was defined as an 'other' type of agency.
10. The analysis is based on the number of agencies that responded to the survey.

11. This amount excludes costs incurred to administer criminal injuries compensation and other financial benefits programs and other costs not specifically related to the formal delivery of services provided to victims of crime.
12. Based on responses from 697 agencies.
13. Based on responses from 690 agencies.
14. **Government – direct service:** a public department, agency or program that is entirely funded and whose service is delivered by regional, municipal, provincial, territorial or federal government departments and their agencies. Examples include: Police-based, system-based, court-based and corrections-based victim service agencies and criminal injuries compensation programs.  
**Government – contracted service:** an agency, program or organization which is funded by a regional, municipal, provincial, territorial or federal department but whose service is delivered by a non-government or community-based agency. Examples include: Ontario's Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services (VCARS) and Quebec's Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels (CAVACs).  
**Non-government/community-based organization:** a private organization that is largely independent of government which is not created for financial or material gain and which addresses concerns such as social and humanitarian issues of development, individual and community welfare and well-being, disadvantage, poverty and environmental protection. Examples include: sexual assault centres and rape crisis centres.
15. Based on responses from 315 agencies.
16. Based on responses from 654 agencies.
17. The types of Aboriginal languages listed in the VSS include: Ojibway, Cree, Inuktitut and 'Other Aboriginal languages'.
18. Based on responses from 435 agencies.
19. Less than 4% of agencies reported using methods other than the ones already mentioned.
20. Excludes 21 agencies that were run completely by volunteers.
21. Aggregated figures for provincial criminal injuries compensation and financial benefit programs may be influenced by the activities of the largest provinces.
22. Of the ten provinces, only Newfoundland and Labrador did not have a compensation program during 2005/2006. A response was not received from British Columbia's compensation program.
23. Only seven out of eight agencies provided financial information.
24. This section of analysis excludes applications from Manitoba and Alberta where breakdowns by sex, age and crime was unavailable. For New Brunswick, details on applications by sex, age groupings and type of crime are based on all new applications received.
25. The data for this section are drawn from the Correctional Service of Canada's Offender Management System, April, 2006.
26. A disclosure refers to the release of information to a registered victim by CSC. These disclosures provided by CSC can contain more than one piece of information. Registered victims can request a wide variety of information types from CSC (see Text box 3).
27. The data for this section are drawn from the National Parole Board, Performance Measurement Division, which manually collects the information from the regional offices on a monthly basis.

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Table 1

**Number of clients served, by sex, age groupings and type of crime, April 19, 2006**

Type of crime	Grand total		Males by age grouping					Females by age grouping			Age and sex unknown		
			Total males		0 to 18 years	18 years and over	Age unknown	Total females	0 to 18 years	18 years and over		Age unknown	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	number	number	percent	number	number			
Homicide	169	2	75	1	18	51	6	92	1	x	81	8	x
Other offences causing death	151	2	58	1	8	42	8	82	1	12	66	4	11
Sexual assault - total	1,851	23	275	3	103	162	10	1,518	19	415	1,043	60	58
by spouse, ex-spouse, intimate partner	356	4	34	0	x	30	x	310	4	52	242	16	12
by other family member	778	10	125	2	54	65	6	628	8	189	413	26	25
by non-family relationship	717	9	116	1	46	67	3	580	7	174	388	18	21
Other violent offences - total	3,411	42	562	7	146	400	16	2,534	31	183	2,193	158	315
by spouse, ex-spouse, intimate partner	2,132	26	157	2	13	141	3	1,829	23	36	1,652	141	146
by other family member	578	7	109	1	67	38	4	363	4	68	291	4	106
by non-family relationship	701	9	296	4	66	221	9	342	4	79	250	13	63
Criminal harassment (stalking)	203	3	19	0	x	15	x	175	2	13	153	9	x
<b>Total crimes against the person</b>	<b>5,785</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>4,401</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>3,536</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>395</b>
Arson	27	0	16	0	x	x	x	9	0	x	x	x	x
Other property crimes	505	6	223	3	20	173	30	220	3	12	188	20	62
Impaired driving	72	1	32	0	x	28	x	37	0	x	34	x	x
Other traffic offences	72	1	24	0	x	17	x	39	0	x	31	x	9
Other <i>Criminal Code</i> offences	299	4	83	1	20	57	6	163	2	42	111	10	53
Non-criminal incidents	433	5	147	2	16	125	6	263	3	27	211	25	23
Traffic incidents - undetermined if criminal	42	1	19	0	x	x	x	16	0	x	x	x	7
Other incidents - undetermined if criminal	485	6	98	1	28	58	12	282	3	62	196	24	105
<b>Total other incidents</b>	<b>1,935</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>Unknown type of crime</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>8,080</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,647</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>5,468</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>4,351</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>965</b>

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Victim Services Survey, 2005/2006.



Table 2

**Percentage of victim service agencies that perform a service or work directly and/or through referral, by type of service and work, 2005/2006<sup>1</sup>**

	Direct service	Contracted service	Referral	Not applicable
	percentage			
<b>Criminal justice-related services</b>				
Information on criminal justice system structure and process	89	3	18	1
Court accompaniment	82	4	20	2
Assistance with victim impact statements	80	4	23	3
Court orientation/information	80	3	23	3
Victim/witness preparation	71	3	34	4
Case/trial updates	71	1	23	5
Prevention training (for victims)	60	2	33	11
Critical stress debriefing	59	3	29	16
Victim notification	55	1	37	8
Risk assessment (conduct or coordinate)	49	1	30	21
Legal information	40	1	66	3
Restorative justice/mediation measures: accompaniment and support	27	1	40	31
Restorative justice/mediation measures: orientation and information	16	1	49	31
Other criminal justice-related service	0	0	0	0
<b>Other services</b>				
General information	96	2	12	1
Emotional support	95	2	10	1
Liaise with other agencies on behalf of client	90	2	14	2
Safety planning - immediate	90	2	15	4
Public education/prevention	87	1	14	5
Crisis intervention/response	74	2	31	6
Hospital accompaniment	69	1	13	19
Training	67	3	13	13
Safety planning - long term	66	2	39	4
Advocacy	60	2	32	10
Transportation	54	2	34	17
Emergency and disaster responses	49	1	26	26
Crisis counseling	42	2	50	11
Claims assistance	38	0	44	22
Counseling - individual	28	4	63	11
Basic needs provision	28	1	66	17
Crisis/distress line	27	0	51	24
Self-help/peer support groups	24	1	74	5
Psychological assistance	24	3	66	12
Counseling - group	22	2	62	15
Lobbying activities	21	0	19	55
Compensation - financial	19	0	64	17
Shelter/housing - emergency	15	0	77	7
Counseling - couple/family	13	1	70	16
Conflict resolution	12	1	61	27
Housing assistance	12	0	80	8
Compensation - other	10	3	61	22
First aid/health/medical services	8	0	69	21
Child protection services	4	1	74	19
Other service	3	0	0	1
Shelter/housing - long term housing	2	0	84	10

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

1. Totals exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Victim Services Survey, 2005/2006.

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