

Temporary Living Expenses Policy

It is the intention of the Victims Compensation Program to provide limited temporary living expenses for a spouse or a legal dependent who relied on the victim's income for support if the victim becomes incapacitated or deceased due to the crime. In order for a victim to make an informed decision, the Compensation Program will provide information about the Department of Children and Families Economic Services Division and suggest that the victim apply for assistance from them first.

A "dependent" is defined in the Victims Compensation Program's statute 13 V.S.A. § 5351 (2) as **"a victim's spouse or a person who is legally dependent for support upon a victim."** In the case of a dependent, **"pecuniary loss" means the cost of psychological, psychiatric or mental health counseling, funeral expenses for the victim and upon demonstration of financial hardship, temporary living expenses."**

If the victim's spouse or legal dependents are dependent on the victim's monthly income to maintain household expenses, the Victims Compensation Program will pay temporary living expenses at 85% of the victim's gross monthly income at the time of the crime. After the victim's incapacitation or death due to the crime, the Victims Compensation Program will look at any new household income received by a victim's spouse or legal dependent as a collateral resource and the amount received will be deducted from the victim's income. Household income may include, but is not limited to, Reach Up benefits, food stamps, general assistance, child support, disability, income from spouse, and, in homicide cases, death benefits paid through the Social Security Administration for surviving minor children.

Proof of the victim's income must be provided to the Program in the form of pay stubs, tax returns, or other documentation as requested by the Program. In cases where the victim is deceased or incapacitated due to the crime, and unable to provide proof of income, the Program will reimburse temporary living expenses based on monthly rental/mortgage payment, utilities (heat, water, and electric), and basic phone service for one cell phone or land line upon submission of a receipt.

In cases where a person was legally dependent upon the victim for support, and the dependent is placed elsewhere for care, the Compensation Program will consider replacement of the dependent's basic needs as long as the new care giver can demonstrate financial hardship. Requested support cannot exceed 85% of a victim's gross income, less any new collateral resources received on behalf of the dependent. Payment will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Victims Compensation Program will reimburse temporary living expenses not to exceed a maximum net reimbursement of \$500.00 per week, for up to 12 weeks, dependent on verification.

Temporary living expenses will only be considered when the victim's spouse and/or their dependents relied on the victim's income to maintain household expenses and financial hardship is demonstrated. This does not preclude the victim/survivor from receiving lost wages through the Compensation Program if they meet the eligibility requirements.