

Victims Support Scheme

Detailed guide

If you are a victim of crime in NSW
call the **Victims Access Line**
for information and support
1800 633 063

Victims Services NSW Department of Communities and Justice

For more information

1. Go to our website
www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au
2. Call the Victims Access Line 1800 633 063
3. Call the Aboriginal Contact Line 1800 019 123
4. Our email address is vs@justice.nsw.gov.au
5. Our hours are
9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (exc. pub holidays)
6. Our address is
Level 1, Justice Precinct Offices
160 Marsden Street, Parramatta NSW 2150
7. Address all mail to:
The Commissioner of Victims Rights
Victims Services, Locked Bag 5118
Parramatta NSW 2124

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Alternative formats of this information are available.

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What is the Victims Support Scheme?

The Victims Support Scheme helps people who are victims of violent crime in NSW.

If you have been injured by a violent crime, we can help you with:

- Information and referrals
- Counselling
- Financial assistance for immediate needs
- Financial assistance for economic loss
- Recognition payment

How do I know if I am able to get help?

All victims of violent crime in NSW can get help with information and referrals. Contact the Victims Access Line on 1800 633 063 or the Aboriginal Contact Line on 1800 019 123.

Primary victim

You are a primary victim if you have been injured physically or emotionally by a violent crime in NSW.

You are also a primary victim if you were injured while trying to:

- stop someone from being violent towards someone else
- help or rescue a victim of a violent crime
- arrest someone who was being violent to someone else

Primary victims may get help with

- counselling
- financial assistance for immediate needs
- financial assistance for economic loss
- a recognition payment

If you are a parent, step-parent or guardian who cares for a child who is a primary victim you may get help with:

- financial assistance for immediate needs
- financial assistance for economic loss

To apply, use the ***Application for support for primary victims form***.

Primary victims of domestic violence can apply for a grant to help pay for costs needed urgently after the violent crime.

To apply, use the ***INSP Claim Form***.

Secondary victim

You are a secondary victim if you have been injured physically or emotionally from seeing a violent crime.

Secondary victims may get help with counselling.

To apply, use the ***Application for counselling form***.

Family victim

You are a family victim if you are a member of the immediate family of a homicide victim.

A member of the immediate family is:

- a spouse
- a de facto partner who has lived with the victim for at least two years
- a parent, step-parent or guardian
- a child or step-child or guardian child
- a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, step-sister

Family victims may get help with:

- counselling
- financial assistance for immediate needs
- financial assistance for justice-related expenses
- financial help to pay for the funeral

If you are a parent, step-parent or guardian of a homicide victim or a family member who relied on the homicide victim to support you financially, you may get help with a recognition payment.

To apply, use the ***Application for support for family victims form***.

What can I get help with?

The table summarises the different types of supports that you may get and what information we need from you for each support type.

Purpose	Benefits	Who is eligible to apply?	What information do I need to give?	How long do you have to claim?
Type of help: Counselling				
To help in your recovery	Up to 22 hours of counselling and more for some victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary victims • Secondary victims • Family victims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • Government issued ID 	No time limit
Type of help: Financial assistance for immediate needs				
To help pay for things you need urgently to be safe and healthy because of the violent crime	<p>You may get up to \$5,000 to help pay for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing the locks on your doors • moving house • putting an alarm in your home • emergency doctor, dentist and other medical bills • crime scene clean up <p>You may get up to \$9,500 to help pay for the funeral</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary victims • Parents, step-parents and guardians • Family victims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • Government issued ID • Police* or government/government-funded organisation report, or a medical report that provides details about what happened and shows how the violent crime has affected you (not required for family victims) • Copies of tax invoices, receipts or treatment plans of costs you are claiming • A description of how each cost relates directly to the violent crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 2 years from the violent crime[†] • For children, within 2 years of turning 18

* If the violent crime was reported to the police, you do not need to send us a police report – just provide as much information as you can in the application form

† If the violent crime directly resulted in the death of a victim, the two year time period commences from the date of death.

Purpose	Benefits	Who is eligible to apply?	What information do I need to give?	How long do you have to claim?
Type of help: Immediate needs support package (INSP)				
To help pay for things you need urgently to be safe and healthy after the violent crime	<p>You may receive grants to help pay for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • security • relocation • furniture and household items • basic clothing and toiletries <p>In total, you may receive up to a \$5,000 grant.</p>	Primary victims of domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • INSP Claim form • Government issued ID • Police* or government/government-funded organisation report, or a medical report that provides details about what happened and shows how the violent crime has affected you (not required for family victims) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 2 years from the violent crime • For children, within 2 years of turning 18
Type of help: Financial assistance for economic loss				
To help pay for loss of earnings and other costs that assist you with your recovery	<p>We can help pay for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lost income because you had to take time off work (up to \$20,000) • out of pocket expenses if it is hard for you to prove lost income (up to \$5,000) • doctor, dentist or other medical bills (up to \$30,000) • some costs of attending court or coronial proceedings (up to \$5,000) • loss or damage to the clothes you wore or items you had when act of violence happened (up to \$1,500) <p>In total, you may claim up to \$30,000.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary victims • Parents, step-parents and guardians • Family victims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • Government issued ID • Police* or government/government-funded organisation report that provides details about what happened (not required for family victims) • Medical, dental or counselling reports that show how the violent crime has affected you (not required for family victims) • Copies of tax invoices, receipts or treatment plans of costs you are claiming • A description of how each cost relates directly to the violent crime • Information about your earnings (if claiming lost income) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 2 years from the violent crime[†] • For children, within 2 years of turning 18 • For victims of sexual assault who were children when the violent crime happened: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No time limit for claiming out-of-pocket expenses – Within 2 years of turning 18 for loss of earnings, medical and dental, bills, and loss or damage to personal items

* If the violent crime was reported to the police, you do not need to send us a police report – just provide as much information as you can in the application form

† If the violent crime directly resulted in the death of a victim, the two year time period commences from the date of death.

Purpose	Benefits	Who is eligible to apply?	What information do I need to give?	How long do you have to claim?
Type of help: Recognition payment				
To acknowledge that a violent crime has been committed against you	Payment is based on the offence, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$15,000 for financially dependent family victim or children under 18 at the time of death • \$10,000 for primary victims of sexual assault involving – serious bodily injury, multiple offenders, or an offensive weapon; a sexual assault, sexual act, or attempted sexual assault involving a series of incidents • \$7,500 for parents, step-parents or guardians, current spouses, or de facto partners of a homicide victim • \$5,000 for primary victims of a sexual assault (one incident), attempted sexual assault with serious bodily injury, assault with grievous bodily harm, or physical assault of a child that involves a series of incidents • \$1,500 for primary victims of an attempted sexual assault (without serious bodily injury), sexual touching, a robbery involving violence, or an assault (without grievous bodily harm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary victims • Parents, step-parents and guardians • Financially dependent family victims and children under 18 years at the time of death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • Government issued ID • Police* or government/government-funded organisation report that provides details about what happened (not required for family victims) • Medical, dental or counselling reports that show how the violent crime has affected you (not required for family victims) 	Within 2 years from the violent crime† <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children, within 2 years of turning 18 • For victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse, within 10 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – For children, within 10 years of turning 18 – For victims of sexual assault who were children when the incident happened, no time limits apply

* If the violent crime was reported to the police, you do not need to send us a police report – just provide as much information as you can in the application form

† If the violent crime directly resulted in the death of a victim, the two year time period commences from the date of death.

Information we need from you

To help us process your application, please make sure you carefully fill out the application form and submit it with a copy of a current government issued ID (for example, a driver's license, passport, Medicare card, or a card issued by Centrelink). If you do not include ID, we may not accept your application.

You also need to send us more information depending on the help you are applying for. This is detailed in the table below.

Support type	Further information we need from you
Counselling	You do not need to send us more information.
Financial assistance for immediate needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you did not report the violent crime to the police, make sure you send us a report from a government or government-funded organisation that provides more details about what happened, or a medical report that shows how the violent crime has affected you*• You need to send us copies of tax invoices, receipts or treatment plans of the costs you are claiming.• You also need to explain how these costs relate directly to the violent crime.
INSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you did not report the violent crime to the police, make sure you send us a report from a government or government-funded organisation that provides more details about what happened, or a medical report that shows how the violent crime has affected you*• You also need to send us a completed INSP Claim Form.

* Family victims do not need to provide this information

Support type	Further information we need from you
Financial assistance for economic loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you did not report the violent crime to the police, make sure you send us a report from a government or government-funded organisation that provides more details about what happened.* • You also need to send us medical, dental or counselling reports that show how the violent crime has affected you physically or psychologically/emotionally* • If you are claiming loss of income, please provide a letter from your employer which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The name of your employer – How much you were paid – The dates you could not work (supported by medical certificates) – Your leave entitlements – Employment type (part-time, full time, casual, contract) – Whether you have been paid, or are entitled to money from another source (for example, income protection, workers compensation, Centrelink benefits) • If you are claiming out of pocket expenses, medical bills, costs of attending court or coronial proceedings, and/or loss or damage to clothing/ personal items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – You need to send us copies of tax invoices, receipts or treatment plans of the costs you are claiming. – You also need to explain how these costs relate directly to the violent crime.
Recognition payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you did not report the violent crime to the police, make sure you send us a report from a government or government-funded organisation that provides more details about what happened.* • You also need to send us medical, dental or counselling reports that show how the violent crime has affected you physically or psychologically/emotionally*

* Family victims do not need to provide this information

Important information about your application

Make sure you include a copy of a current government issued ID when you submit your application. If you do not give us ID, we may not accept your application.

This could be a:

- driver's licence,
- passport,
- Medicare card, or
- card issued by Centrelink

If you are applying for financial assistance for economic loss and/or a recognition payment, make sure you send us medical, dental or counselling reports that show how the violent crime has affected you. We cannot assess your claim until your reports are received. If you do not give us your reports within 12 months of lodging your application, your claim will be closed.

Frequently asked questions

Where can I find the application forms?

You can find all the application forms on the Victims Services website at www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au

What happens if I submit an incomplete application form?

If you do not fill out the application form and do not send us the required the documents, we may not accept your application.

Because we cannot keep incomplete applications, you will need to fill out the application form and send it with all the required documents.

Can I send medical, dental or counselling reports after submitting my application?

If you are applying for financial assistance or a recognition payment, you need to send us medical, dental or counselling reports that show how the violent crime has affected you.

You have up to 12 months after submitting your application to send us these documents.

What happens if I don't send medical, dental or counselling reports before 12 months of submitting my application?

Your application will be closed. Because we cannot keep incomplete applications, you will need to fill out the application form and send it to us again with all the supporting documents.

Do I need to provide a police report to support my application?

If the violent crime was reported to the police, give as much information as you can in the application form. This information will help us learn more about what happened. You do not need to send us a copy of the police report.

If the violent crime was reported to another government or government-funded organisation instead of the police, please send us a report from that organisation that provides more information about what happened.

How do I get the medical, dental or counselling report to support my application?

You should contact the medical, dental or counselling service you attended to get copies of your relevant medical records. Explain that you need this information because you are applying to Victims Services for support. You are entitled to a copy of your medical records under NSW law. If you have to pay to get copies of existing records, we will reimburse the cost of getting copies of existing records if your application is successful.

Or you could ask your health practitioner to complete the Certificate of Injury template available on our website. Please note, Victims Services does not pay for the cost incurred from completing this Certificate.

Is there a template I can use to collect all the information I need to support my application?

Yes, there are templates you can use on our website at www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au. You will find an Expense Form, Certificate of Earnings form, Certificate of Injury form and Government-funded organisation form. Please read ***How to collect information to support your application*** if are not sure how to use these templates.

Can I get a report from an Approved Counsellor to support my application?

If you are unable to get any other report about a psychological injury, you can ask an Approved Counsellor to provide you with a report. Victims Services will pay for this report. You can then submit this report to Victims Services.

Where can I find an Approved Counsellor?

You can find a list of Approved Counsellors on the Victims Services website at www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au.

I can't access the list of Approved Counsellor because I don't have access to the internet. How can I make an appointment with an Approved Counsellor?

Call VAL on 1800 633 063 or ACL on 1800 019 123. Alternatively, you can ask for help from a representative or support worker.

What options do I have if I can't see an Approved Counsellor in person?

Phone and web-based counselling is available if you are not able to see an Approved Counsellor in person.

You can search for counsellors that provide these services on our website.

How long will it take to receive payment?

There is no set time to how long it will take to receive payment. It depends on a range of factors such as the type of case or if we have all the information we need.

Do I need a lawyer?

No. If you need help, please contact VAL on 1800 633 063 or ACL on 1800 019 123.

Does this affect my Centrelink payments?

Your Centrelink payments should not be affected. Visit the Centrelink website www.humanservices.gov.au for more information.

Do I need to pay tax on my payment?

Contact the Australian Tax Office's Personal Tax Information Line on 13 28 61 to find out if you need to pay tax.

You could also talk to an accountant or a tax professional.

