

INSIDE THIS REPORT

Letter from the Chairman	2
Program Overview	3
Year in Review	4
Application Process	5
Program Coverage	6
Training and Outreach	7
Claims Received	8
Program Funding and Expenditures	9

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am honored to present the annual report of the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board for fiscal year 2014. This report covers the board's activities from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

This year, the Reparations Board reached a milestone of 40 years of dedicated service to victims of crime in Minnesota. During that time, more than 42,366 victims have applied for assistance. The mission of the program has remained constant since its inception: to help crime victims and their family members recover from the tragic impact of violent crime by providing reimbursement for their financial losses.



During fiscal year 2014, the board provided critical assistance to more than 1,200 victims and/or their family members. Over \$2.9 million was paid for medical and dental care, mental health counseling, funeral and burial expenses, lost wages, and loss of support. Financial assistance was provided to victims from every geographic area of the state.

At its monthly meetings, the board engaged in careful deliberations, and listened attentively to many victims and their family members who appeared before the board. The board decided 243 claims, or approximately 18 percent of all new claims received. The remaining claims were processed administratively by board staff.

The board strives to provide the best possible service, and as the first board chairman stated 40 years ago, "We are proud to be an arm of our state government extending a helping hand to victims of crime." I have enjoyed working in collaboration with our excellent board members, as well as Reparations Director Marie Bibus and her experienced and dedicated staff, to continue serving crime victims throughout Minnesota.

Robert Goodell, Chairman
Minnesota Crime Victims Reparation Board

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

History

The first victim compensation programs were created during the 1960s to help victims of crime cope with their financial losses. Today, every state and many other countries have programs to provide reimbursement to crime victims.

In Minnesota, the Crime Victims Reparations Act was passed by the Legislature in 1974. The Legislature recognized that many victims incur expenses they cannot afford to pay, and most are unable to collect full restitution from criminal offenders. As a result of the reparations program, victims are able to receive the financial help they need to assist in their recovery.

Staff

There are currently 11 full-time reparations staff who work in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs. Staff members set up incoming claims, gather documentation, approve and deny claims, and process payments.

In addition, staff work on collecting restitution and recovering funds from civil lawsuits. This involves preparing and submitting legal paperwork, attending hearings, and negotiating settlements. As a result of these efforts, the recovery unit receives more than 3,400 checks annually.

Board Members

The Reparations Board is composed of five members appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. Under Minnesota law, one member of the board must be a physician, and at least one member must have been a victim of crime. The board members' terms are four years in length, and they may serve more than one term.



Current board membership includes: (left to right) Robert Goodell, Anoka County Attorney's Office; Lisa Eder, Hennepin County Attorney's Office; Dr. Philip Eckman, retired; Ellyn Rapaport, crime victim; Lt. Kimberly Lund, Minneapolis Police Department.

Board Responsibilities

The board ensures that funds are distributed in accordance with the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Act, Minnesota Statutes Section 611A.51 to 611A.67 and Minn. Rules 3050.0100 to 3050.4100. In addition, the board develops policies and rules regarding eligibility and coverage, and determines payment rates.

Appeals

In fiscal year 2014, the board heard 54 appeals. Of those, 39 were affirmed, 10 were reversed and paid, and five were held over for more information. There were five new requests for administrative hearings. Pre-hearing conferences were held in four cases. Three hearings were held, and orders were granted in favor of the board in all three cases.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Claim Trends

The total number of claims received by the Crime Victims Reparations Board decreased slightly for the third consecutive year. The board received 1,376 new claims during fiscal year 2014, compared to 1,490 claims in fiscal year 2013. This decrease was primarily due to a lower number of claims for assaults and vehicular crashes.

The most notable claim trend during fiscal year 2014 was a significant increase in claims related to homicides and robberies. There were 152 claims submitted by family members of homicide victims, compared to 143 during the previous year. The number of claims for robberies increased from 75 last year to 101 this year.

The most prevalent crimes were homicides, assaults, child sexual abuse, sexual assaults, and robberies. Twenty-seven percent of the claims received were the result of domestic violence.

Customer Service

Excellent customer service is a key performance goal. During fiscal year 2014, 97 percent of recipients gave the program a positive overall service rating. Ninety percent of recipients said they were satisfied with the amount of benefits received.

Expanded Coverage

The board had sufficient resources to increase the payment rate for medical expenses to 60 percent. The board also increased the maximum funeral benefit from \$6,500 to \$7,500. These changes were effective on July 1, 2014.

In addition, the board adopted new rules expanding coverage for family members of victims. The maximum benefit paid to families caring for an injured victim increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Also, the maximum benefit timeline for lost wages for family members of a deceased victim increased from one week to six weeks. The new rules were effective on February 3, 2014.

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women applauded the expanded coverage, stating that it would be "helpful to victims throughout their journeys of physical, emotional, and financial recovery from the often devastating effects of crime."

Faster Processing Time

During fiscal year 2014, 90 percent of recipients indicated that benefits were paid in a timely manner. The average processing time was 108 days from the time a claim was received to the first payment made to the applicant. This was faster than the previous year's average of 110 days.

Increased Restitution Recoveries

Due to the consistent efforts of the reparations recovery unit, collections were substantially greater in fiscal year 2014. Total collections increased from \$634,000 in fiscal year 2013 to \$890,979 in fiscal year 2014.

In addition, the reparations director served on the Minnesota Restitution Working Group. This statewide committee was created by the Legislature in 2014 to examine restitution procedures and practices, and make recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of restitution collections.

Claimant Comment

"Staff was very nice and helpful. I felt like they really cared."

APPLICATION PROCESS

Intake

The application process begins when the board receives a claim form from the victim or a family member. A request is then sent to the investigating law enforcement agency for information verifying the crime. Claims specialists review the application and law enforcement report to determine whether the claim meets eligibility requirements.

Payment Process

If the applicant clearly meets eligibility requirements, billing information and other documentation is gathered from service providers to determine the amount of the victim's losses. If the victim missed work because he or she was disabled, the employer and a physician are asked to provide information about the victim's lost wages and disability status. Staff members work to ensure all applications are processed in a timely manner and applicants receive all of the benefits due to them.

Claimant Comment

"Thank you for your help. This has relieved a great financial burden from me and my family."

After the amount of the payment is determined, a payment notice and explanation of benefits is sent to the victim. A check is then sent to the victim or his/her service providers within two weeks. In many cases, funds are paid via electronic transfer.

Board Review

If there is a question about the applicant's eligibility under the board's statutes and rules, the claim is forwarded to the board for review. The board meets monthly to review and vote on the eligibility and benefit levels of questionable claims. Typically, the board reviews cases involving contributory misconduct by the victim. If the claim is denied or reduced by the board, the applicant is notified in writing with an explanation of the board's decision.

Appeals Process

An applicant who is dissatisfied with the board's actions on a claim has the right to submit an appeal letter. If an applicant is still dissatisfied with the board's appeal decision, he/she may proceed to an administrative hearing. Hearings are conducted by an impartial administrative law judge at the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Eligibility Requirements

- The applicant must be a victim of a crime involving injury or death in Minnesota, or a Minnesota resident victimized while traveling in another country.
- Claims must be submitted to the board within three years of the crime (except for child abuse).
- The crime must have been reported to the police within 30 days (except for sexual assault and child abuse).
- The victim must have cooperated fully with law enforcement officials and prosecution.
- Victims who contributed to the crime through serious misconduct or criminal activity are disqualified or may receive a substantially reduced award.

PROGRAM COVERAGE

The Reparations Board provides benefits for expenses incurred by the victim as a result of the crime. The board pays only expenses that are not covered by another source of funding, such as health or auto insurance. Property losses are not covered.

There are rate limits or caps on most expenses. Medical, dental and mental health costs are usually covered at a reduced rate when paid directly to the provider. Total benefits paid may not exceed \$50,000.

Benefits are available for the following expenses:

- Medical and dental costs, including hospital and clinic fees, ambulance service, prescriptions, chiropractic care, physical therapy, and accessibility remodeling.

- Mental health counseling for the victim, up to \$7,500. Counseling benefits are also available for immediate family members of the victim and witnesses to a violent crime.
- Crime scene cleanup, up to \$10,000.
- Funeral and burial costs, up to \$7,500, including transportation and lodging for family members to attend the funeral. An additional \$1,000 is available for a headstone.
- Lost wages for the victim due to a disabling injury from the crime, up to 52 weeks. Limited lost-wage benefits are available for immediate family members.

Claimant Comment

“Help was provided much more quickly than I expected. My case worker was kind and professional.”

- Survivor benefits for dependents of a deceased victim.
- Payment for childcare or professional household services to replace services previously provided by the victim.



Board members Eckman and Lund



Board members Rapaport and Eder

TRAINING AND OUTREACH

The Reparations Board has a training and outreach program to ensure all victims of violent crime receive information about reparations and have an opportunity to apply for benefits. The board uses various ways to raise program awareness, including training sessions, a website, and distribution of informational materials.

Most crime victims are referred to the reparations board by victim/witness assistance programs, hospitals, county attorneys, or law enforcement. Staff members provide training and information to those professionals who assist crime victims with their claims.

Every year, the training coordinator presents a training session at the Minnesota Victim Assistance Academy or the statewide crime and victimization conference.

During fiscal year 2014, the reparations staff also responded to requests for training from shelters, crisis centers, community organizations, and prosecuting attorneys offices. Five training sessions were conducted at locations throughout the state, including Duluth, Mankato, Milaca, St. Paul, and St. Peter.

The reparations program has a variety of brochures, handbooks and posters available. Law enforcement agencies, county attorney offices, and victim service programs may request materials by submitting an order form. The order form and copies of most program materials, including the application form, may be downloaded from the Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs website at ojp.dps.mn.gov.

Participant Comments

“This was great information to give to advocates.”

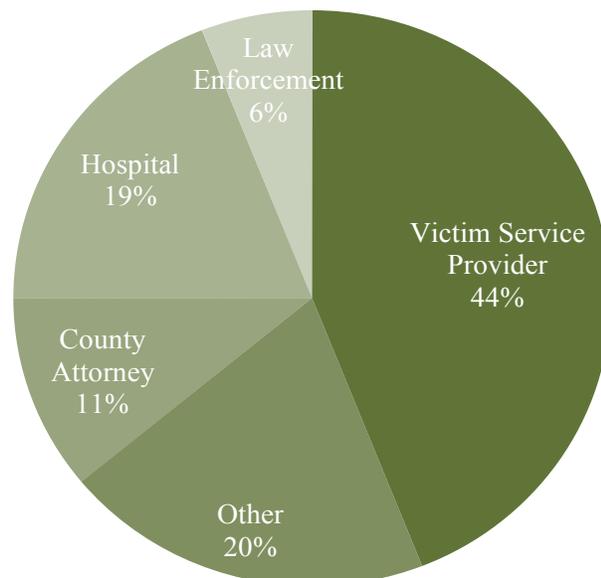
“The information was useful because I did not know something like this was offered.”

“Great presentation.”

“Very informative.”

Claims by Referral Source

Referral Source	Number of Claims
County Attorney	155
Domestic Abuse Program	54
Funeral Home	37
Hospital	258
Internet Website	11
Other	220
Law Enforcement	75
Probation Agent	9
Sexual Assault Program	59
Victim/Witness Program	498
TOTAL	1,376



CLAIMS RECEIVED

In fiscal year 2014, the Reparations Board received 1,376 claims statewide. The majority of claims came from victims in the following counties: Hennepin (31 percent), Ramsey (19 percent), Dakota (5 percent), Anoka (5 percent), Washington (3 percent), and Olmsted (3 percent).

In half the counties, claims decreased from fiscal year 2013 to fiscal year 2014. This was likely due to a decrease in crime. However, there were a few counties where claims increased significantly, including: Beltrami, Hennepin, Kittson, Wright, and Yellow Medicine.

The most prevalent crime categories were assaults (40 percent), child abuse (27 percent), homicides (11 percent), impaired driving (5 percent), sexual assaults (7 percent), and robberies (7 percent).

Fifty-four percent of victims were female and 46 percent were male. Claims for victims 17 years old or younger comprised 29 percent of all new claims.

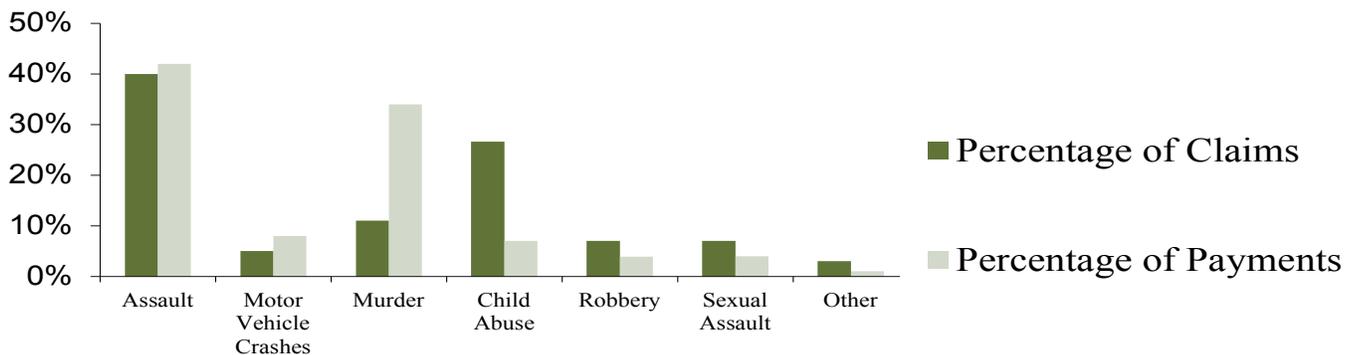
Claimant Comment

“I would like to thank the board for their prompt response to my claim. The benefits will be used to provide for my three children as if their father was still alive.”

Claims by Type of Crime

Crime Type	Number of Claims
Assault-5th Degree	127
Assault-Felony	424
Motor Vehicle Crashes	67
Kidnapping	8
Murder	152
Child Abuse	372
Robbery	101
Sexual Assault	95
Other	30
TOTAL	1,376

Claims and Payments by Crime Type



PROGRAM FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

Funding Sources

The Reparations Board received its funding from a number of sources. Thirty percent of the funding came from an appropriation from the state's general fund.

Forty-two percent of the board's funding was received in grants from the federal government. The program receives an annual federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Twenty-eight percent of the board's funding was derived from special revenue collected by the board. Special revenue included restitution payments from offenders, unclaimed restitution, funds recovered from civil awards to victims, and inmate wage deductions transferred from the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Expenditures

In fiscal year 2014, more than \$2.9 million was paid to reimburse victims and/or their service providers.

The largest category of expenses was medical care for victims, which accounted for 37 percent of the reparation payments. The medical category decreased by three percent this year.

The second-largest category of expenses was economic support, which included lost wages and

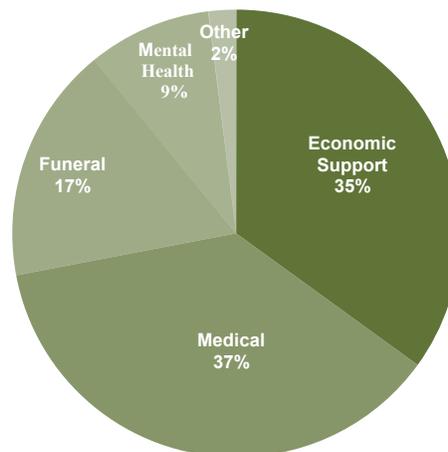
survivor benefits to dependents of a deceased victim. Thirty-five percent of the board's expenses were for economic support.

Funeral and burial expenses were the third largest category of expenditures at 17 percent.

Mental health care was the smallest category, comprising only 9 percent of expenditures.

Other payments, such as crime scene cleanup and accessibility remodeling, accounted for two percent of expenditures.

Payments by Category



Restitution and Inmate Wage Collections

The board is committed to holding offenders accountable for restoring victims' losses. The board has a fund recovery program that has been extraordinarily successful.

In fiscal year 2014, the program recovered \$569,398 in restitution. The program also received \$262,806 in unclaimed restitution monies from counties. In addition, the program recovered \$58,775 from civil awards.

The amount of inmate wages transferred from the Minnesota Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2014 was \$389,597.

Vision for the Future

The board's vision is that all victims should have meaningful access to information about reparations. In 2014, as part of the plain language initiative, the board began revising its materials to present information in a format that is easier to understand.

During 2015, the board is planning to participate in three regional training sessions on victims rights and reparations.

Claimant Comment

“This program was very beneficial during a tough time in my daughter's life.”