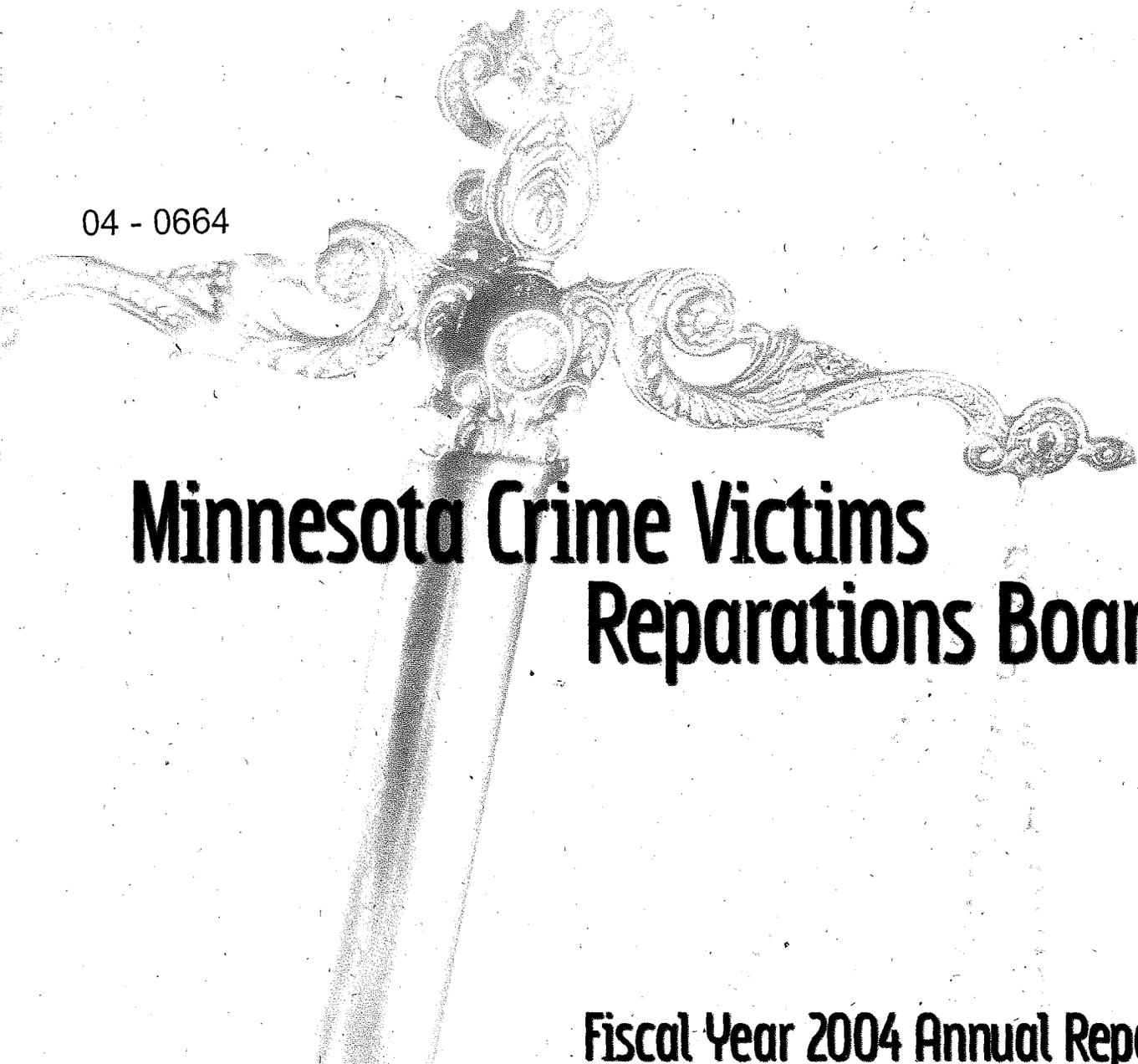
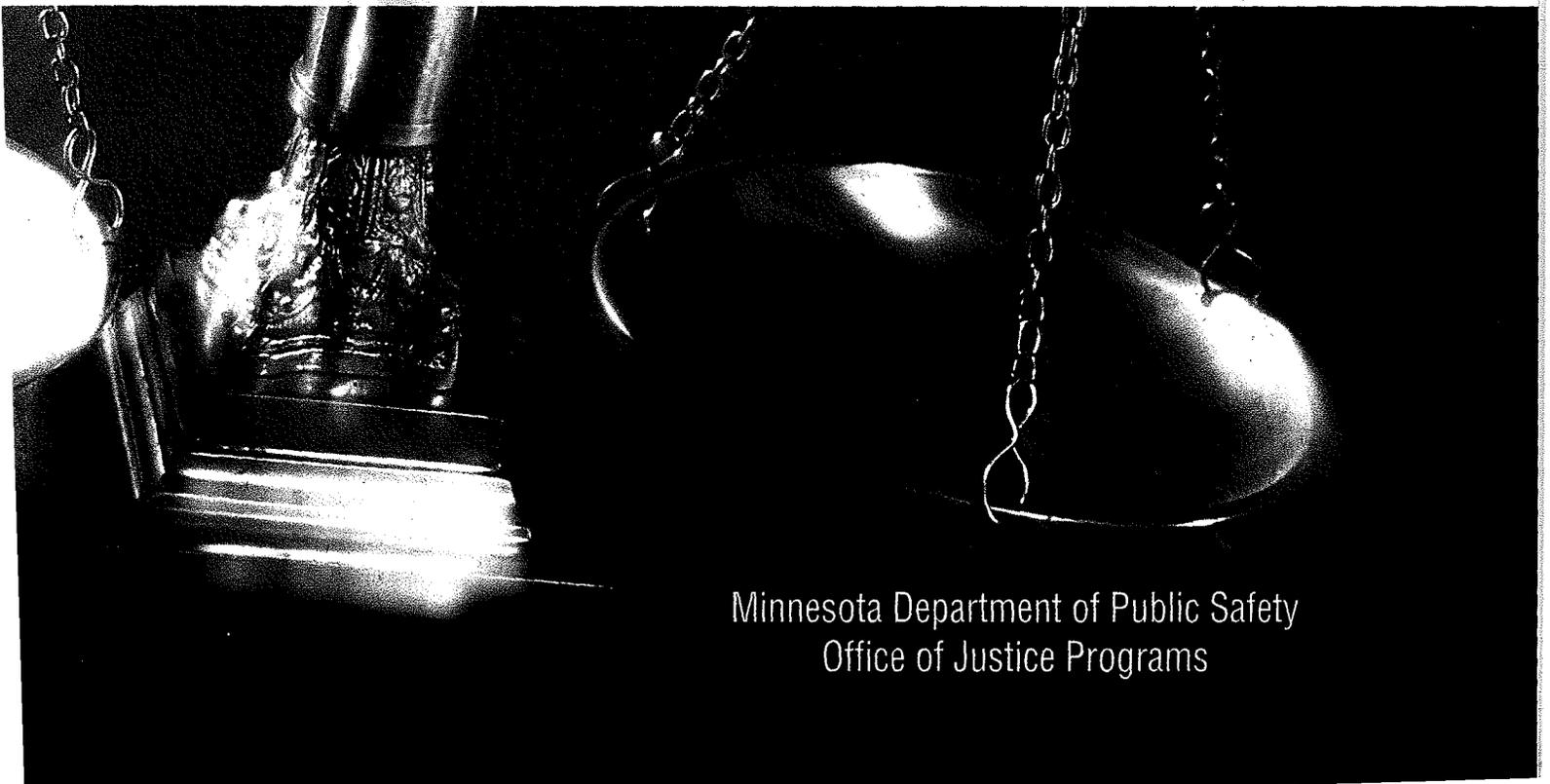


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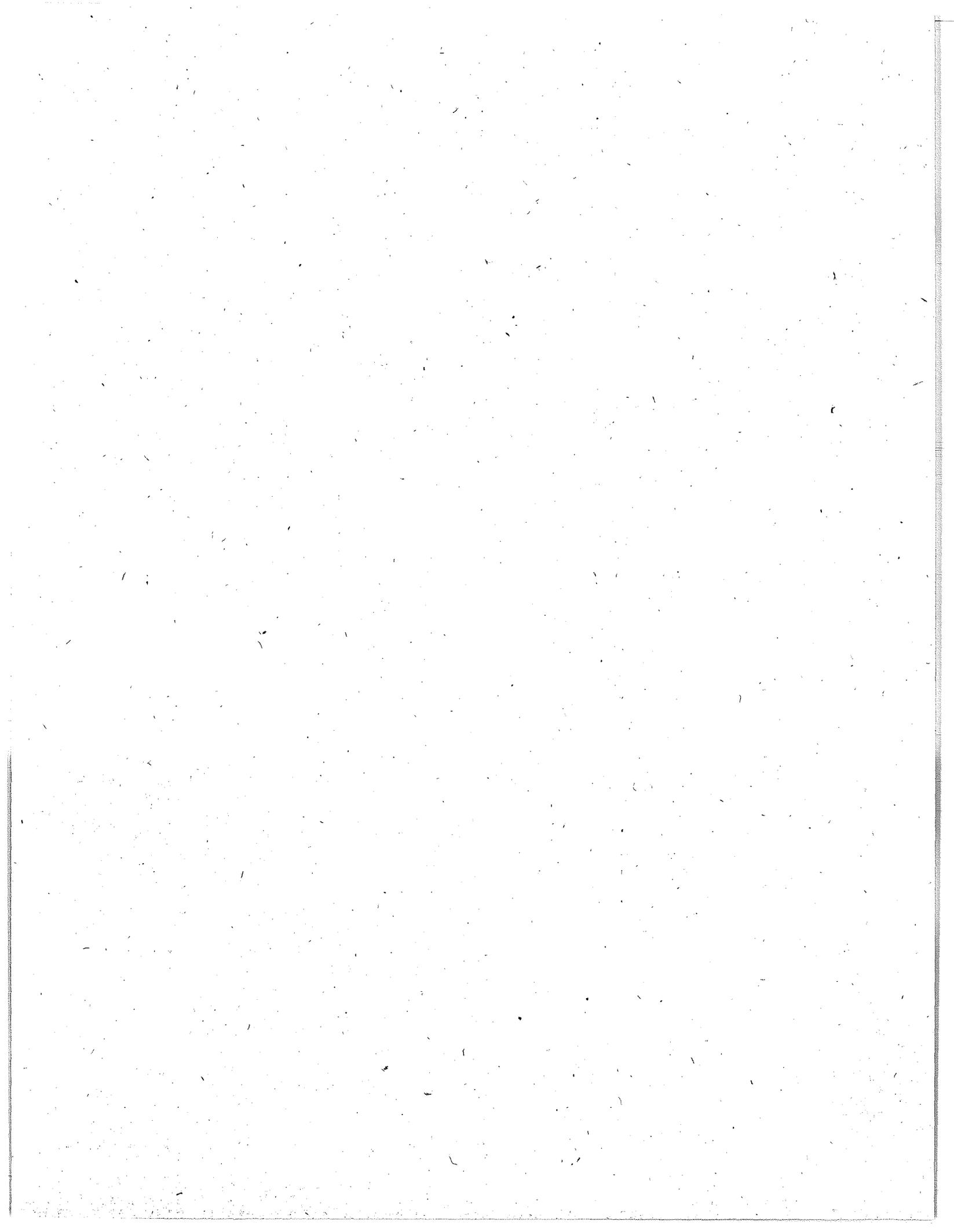


Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board

Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Report



Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Office of Justice Programs



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2004

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Message from the Chairman of the Reparations Board

It is my pleasure to present the annual report of the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board for fiscal year 2004. This report summarizes the Board's activities for the period from July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004.

The mission of the Board is to reduce the impact of violent crime on victims and their families by providing financial assistance. The Board plays a crucial role in helping victims recover from their injuries, so they can return to work or school or to caring for their children. In cases involving a death, the Board helps families with the long and difficult process of rebuilding their lives.

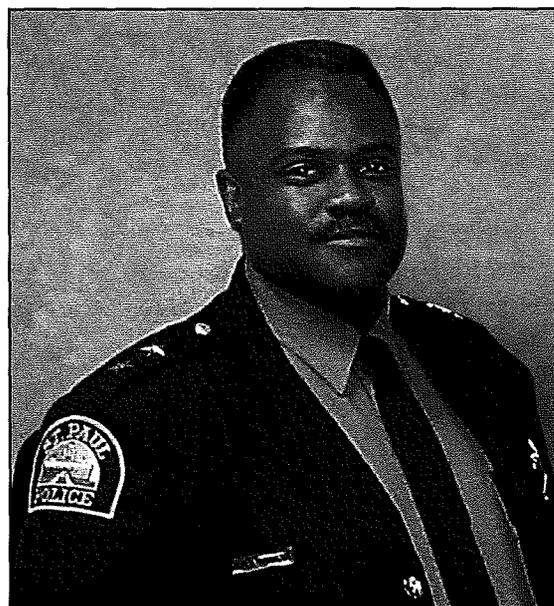
During the past year, the Reparations Board continued providing compensation to victims of violent crime in all areas of the state. The Board received 1658 new claims in fiscal year 2004. A majority of the claims we received resulted from assaults, homicides, robberies, child abuse, sexual assault or drunk driving. Twenty percent of the claimants were seeking help for their children who were victimized. At least 24 percent of the claims submitted were related to domestic violence.

The total amount paid in awards during fiscal year 2004 was \$3.07 million dollars. This funding literally saved the day for many crime victims. The types of expenses paid with these funds included medical care, counseling, funeral and burial services, lost wages, loss of support for survivors, and other expenses such as child care.

As part of our mission, the Board has focused on continually improving the quality of services delivered by the Reparations Program. This has included developing educational materials in a variety of languages and formats to help crime victims understand the process of applying for and receiving reparations. The Board has also provided training to a variety of criminal justice agencies, victim services programs, and other community organizations.

The members of the Board are committed to increasing awareness about reparations, as well as maintaining the efficient administration of the program. Speaking on behalf of all the members of the Board, it is an honor to administer a program that not only assists victims and their family members, but also restores a sense of safety and justice in the community as a whole.

Chief John Harrington



Program Overview

History

Victim compensation programs were first established during the 1960s to restore the losses sustained by victims of crime. Due to lack of insurance or the inability of offenders to make restitution, many innocent victims were left with devastating medical bills and other costs of crime. To bring about justice for victims, several states began developing compensation programs. Today, every state and many other countries have programs to provide financial assistance to crime victims.

In Minnesota, the Crime Victims Reparations Board was created by the legislature in 1974 to help victims with their financial losses as they recover from a violent crime. The legislature recognized that many victims incur expenses that they cannot afford to pay. As a result of the Reparations Program, victims no longer have to bear the financial burden of crime alone.

Since its inception, the mission of the program has been to assist victims and their family members by providing compensation for losses incurred as a result of a crime. Over 27,000 victims of violent crime have applied for assistance during the program's 30 years of operations.



Current Board membership includes: (left to right) John Harrington, St. Paul Police Chief; Robert Goodell, Anoka County Attorney's Office; Mary Biermaier, Ramsey County; William McIntyre, Crime Victim; Dr. Philip Eckman, M.D.

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 a crime.

Board Powers and Duties

The Board is responsible for distributing funds within the boundaries of the laws governing the Board. The Board meets once a month to review claims, and conduct related business.

The Board's primary role is to make decisions on eligibility issues. The Board also hears all appeals submitted by victims. In addition, the Board develops policies and rules regarding eligibility and coverage, and determines payment rates.

Claimant Comment

"We had no savings and the entire incident was very frightening. This helped us to heal and move forward."

Executive Summary

Quality Customer Service

During fiscal year 2004, the Crime Victims Reparations Program made significant progress toward achieving the goal of fast and efficient delivery of services. In order to best meet victims' needs, Minnesota's application process has been designed to be very user friendly. A minimum of paperwork is required, and staff members assist in gathering information for a victim's claim to streamline the process as much as possible. As a result, the average processing time has decreased from five months to four months. Fast processing is critical in helping crime victims avoid unnecessary credit problems due to unpaid bills.

The Crime Victims Reparations Program also continued to provide high quality customer service to all crime victims. One of the unique features of Minnesota's Reparations Program is a customer survey that is sent to recipients. The responses and suggestions received are used to continually improve the claims process and maintain excellent service. During fiscal year 2004, 95 percent of those who responded to the survey reported that staff was polite, professional and understood their concerns. Ninety percent were satisfied with the financial benefits received. Ninety-three percent gave staff an overall service rating of Very Good, Good or Fair. A few of the many positive comments received from claimants in fiscal year 2004 are found throughout this report.

Number of Calls

Reparations staff responded to over **11,547** calls from victims and providers in fiscal year 2004.

Effective Cost-Cutting Measures

In response to dramatic increases in claims as well as the cost of medical expenses, the Board made a few reductions in coverage during fiscal year 2004. Those changes were very effective in lowering the Board's overall expenditures, and had a minimal impact on crime victims. The Board's quick action to address an anticipated shortfall served the program well and ensured that expenditures would not exceed available funds.

One significant change was lowering the rate of payment to providers for medical expenses from 80 percent to 70 percent beginning July 1, 2003. This change was necessary because, for the past few years, medical care has been one of the fastest growing categories of expenses. Medical expenses comprise 45 percent of the program's total expenditures. Further reductions may be necessary in the future if medical costs continue to increase at double-digit rates.

Continued Increase in Felony Assault Claims

For the second year in a row, claims for felony assaults, such as shootings and stabbings, increased. In fiscal year 2004, felony assault claims increased by 4 percent. Other crime categories remained the same or decreased. Due to the discontinuation of moving expense coverage in fiscal year 2003, claims for misdemeanor domestic assaults dropped significantly. This decrease was particularly evident in counties where domestic abuse programs had been referring victims specifically for assistance with relocation expenses. The decrease in misdemeanor assaults contributed to the decrease in the total number of claims from 2023

in fiscal year 2003 to 1658 in fiscal year 2004.

Despite the decrease in the total number of claims filed, there were increases in some areas of greater Minnesota. Counties where increases occurred included Becker, Chisago, Clay, Freeborn, Polk, Winona and Wright. The percentage of claims received from the seven county metropolitan area remained the same at 57 percent of all claims.

Claimant Comment

"This was the best help I had because my income was very low, and you helped in the time of need."

Program Structure

The Reparations Program is a unit within the Office of Justice Programs Division in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Reparations staff report to Jeri Boisvert, Director of the Office of Justice Programs.

Staff members during 2004

Twelve staff members are responsible for processing claims, assisting victims who apply for benefits, and providing training. Current staff members are:

Alceny Ajayi, Claims Specialist;
Marie Bibus, Program Director;
Gertrude Borowski, Client Specialist;
Jeanne Brann, Admin. Specialist;
Danielle Kitto, Claims Manager;
Barbara McCarty, Claims Manager;
Mary Lou Nelson, Claims Specialist;
Catherine O'Bryan, Receptionist;
Nancy Reissner, Office Manager;
Jesse Standal, Police Liaison;
Amy Studtmann, Claims Spec.;
L.V., Admin. Specialist.

Application Process

The application process begins when a claim form is received from the victim. A request is then sent to the investigating law enforcement agency for information verifying the crime. Claims specialists review the application and law enforcement reports to make an initial decision on the claim. This includes determining whether the claim meets the program's eligibility requirements listed below.

Eligibility Requirements

- The applicant must have been a victim of a crime involving injury or death in Minnesota.
- Claims must be submitted to the Board within 3 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.
- Victims who contributed to the crime through serious misconduct or criminal activity are disqualified, or may receive a substantially reduced award.

Award Process

If the applicant clearly meets all of the eligibility requirements, the staff immediately begins to collect billing information and other documentation from service providers to determine the amount of the victim's losses. If the victim missed work because they were disabled, the employer and a physician are asked to provide information about the victim's lost wages. Staff members work to ensure that all applications are processed in a timely manner, and that applicants receive all of the benefits due to them.

After the amount of the award is determined, an award notice and explanation of benefits is sent to the victim and their providers. After the award notice is mailed, a check is sent to the victim or their providers by the Department of Finance. In some cases, providers are paid through an electronic fund 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 their review. The Board votes on the eligibility and benefit levels of questionable claims. Typically, the Board reviews cases involving contributory misconduct or lack of cooperation by the victim. If the claim is denied or reduced by the Board, the victim is notified in writing of the denial or reduction in benefits, and the reasons for the Board's decision.

Appeals Process

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the Board's actions on their claim may submit an appeal letter. After the Board hears their appeal, applicants who are still dissatisfied with the Board's decision can proceed to an administrative hearing. Hearings are conducted by an impartial administrative law judge.

Claimant Comment

“When a terrible thing happens, it was nice to get information regarding how to handle the situation and how to recover the losses that we incurred. A job well done—it was needed and helpful.”

Program Coverage

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

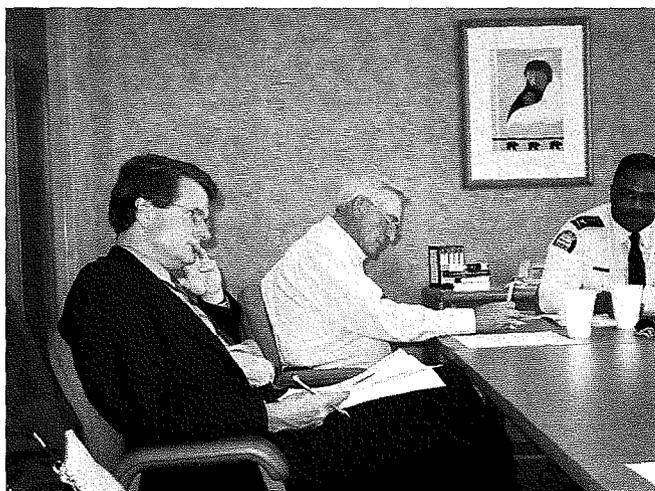
There are rate limits or caps on most expenses. In addition, total benefits may not exceed \$50,000.

Benefits are available for the following expenses:

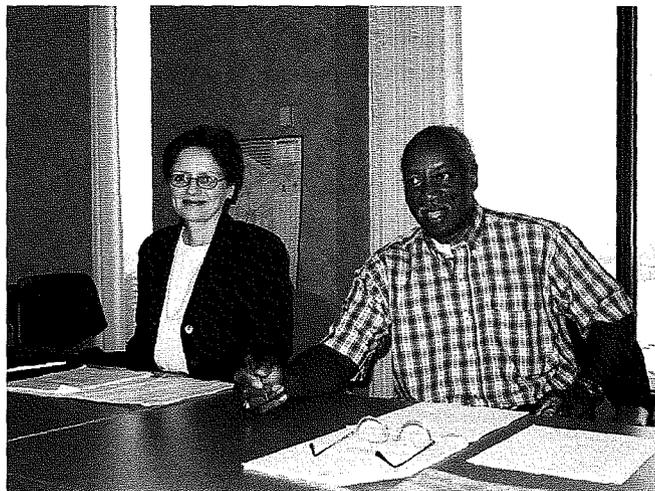
- Medical or dental costs, including hospital and clinic fees, ambulance service, prescriptions, chiropractic care, physical therapy, and accessibility remodeling.
- Mental health care for the victim, up to \$7500. Benefits are also available for counseling for immediate family members of the victim and witnesses to a violent crime.
- Expenses related to the return of an abducted child.
- Funeral and burial costs up to \$7500, including transportation for family members to attend the funeral.
- Lost wages for the victim due to a disabling physical or psychological injury from the crime, up to 52 weeks. Limited lost wages are also available for immediate family members of a deceased or injured victim.
- Loss of support for dependents of a deceased victim to replace the victim's financial contribution to the family.
- Childcare or household services to replace services provided by the victim prior to the crime.

Claimant Comment

"I am very pleased with the benefits my family and I received through reparations. I would and will recommend your services to other victims."



Board members Goodell, Eckman and Harrington



Board members Biermaier and McIntyre

Education and Outreach Program

The Reparations Board has an education and outreach program to ensure that all victims of violent crime receive information about reparations and have an opportunity to apply for benefits. The program uses various ways to raise awareness, including training events, a website, a newsletter, and distribution of informational materials in multiple languages and formats.

The program provides training and information to professionals who have the most contact with crime victims. Training about reparations benefits and policies is provided during quarterly seminars for advocates throughout the state. The staff also responds to requests for training from shelters, crisis centers, community organizations, and city, county or U.S. attorney offices.

During fiscal year 2004, the reparations staff conducted 19 training sessions for these programs at locations throughout the state.

The program has a variety of brochures, handbooks and posters available. Law enforcement agencies, county attorney offices, and victim service programs can request materials by submitting an order form. The order form and copies of materials can be found on the Department of Public Safety website at www.ojp.state.mn.us.

Fiscal Year 04 Training Statistics

A total of 19 training sessions were conducted. Training was provided to the following groups:

- 1 Funeral Home Directors
- 1 Medical Facilities
- 3 Mental Health Providers
- 10 Victim Services Providers
- 4 Community Groups - victim service providers, law enforcement, corrections, court services, county attorneys, social services

Of the participants who completed an evaluation, 98.36 percent rated the overall content as excellent or good.

Claims by Referral Source

Referral Method	Number of Claims
Funeral Home	36
Hospital	131
Internet Web site	6
Other	164
Police	181
Poster/PSA	13
Probation Officer	14
Prosecutor	236
Sexual Assault Program	86
Shelter	111
Social Services	35
Unknown	20
Victim/Witness Program	625
TOTAL	1658

TRAINING PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

“The speaker’s knowledge of the material along with excellent handouts created a quality presentation of excellence.”

“The information is powerful and will be useful to clients.”

“Very informative and useful. Did not know the service existed.”

Claims Received

In fiscal year 2004, the Reparations Board received 1658 claims from all geographic areas of the state. This was a decrease from the previous year due to the discontinuation of coverage for moving expenses. The majority of claims were from victims in the metropolitan area. Thirty percent of claims filed were from Hennepin County and thirteen percent were from Ramsey County.

The most common crimes for which claims were filed included assaults (54 percent), child abuse (14 percent), drunk driving (10 percent), homicides (7 percent), sexual assaults (6 percent), and robberies (5 percent).

Twenty percent of the victims were children, age 17 or less. Fifty-seven percent of the victims were female. Sixty percent were white, 15 percent were African-American, 7 percent were Hispanic or Latino, 5 percent were American Indian, 2 percent were Asian-American, and 11 percent were other/unknown.

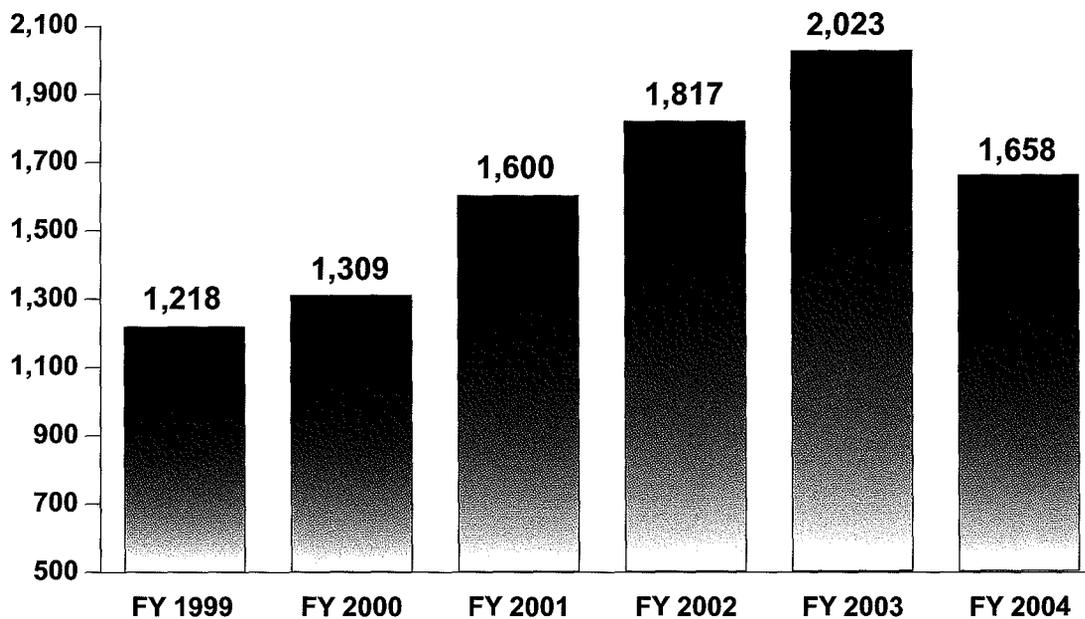
Claims by Type of Crime

Crime Type	Number of Claims
Assault-5th Degree	221
Assault Felony	676
Drunk Driving	158
Kidnapping	13
Murder	123
Child Abuse	239
Robbery	76
Sexual Assault	100
Other	52
TOTAL	1658

Claimant Comment

"The people at Reparations and the doctors at HCMC were true professionals, and I will always be grateful for their care and efficiency in their work."

Claims Received



Program Funding and Expenditures

Funding Sources

Program funding of 4.3 million dollars annually comes to the Board from state and federal sources. Half of the Board's funding comes from an appropriation from the state general fund. In addition, the Board collects special revenue. Special revenue includes restitution payments from offenders, funds from civil awards paid to victims, and inmate wage deductions received through the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Over 30 percent of the program's funding is received from the federal government. The Program receives a federal grant annually from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. The federal crime victim funds are derived from federal criminal fines.

In addition, in fiscal year 2004, the Program received restitution funds totaling \$750,000 from cases prosecuted by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Restitution And Civil Award Collections

The Reparations Board is committed to holding offenders accountable for restoring the victim's losses. In 1993, the Board started a Fund Recovery Program to improve the collection of restitution from offenders as well as civil awards. The Fund Recovery Program has been extraordinarily successful. The Program has consistently surpassed its goal of increasing collections by 5 percent annually.

In fiscal year 2004, the Program recovered \$343,826 in restitution and \$121,069 in civil awards. The Program also received \$218,269 in

unclaimed restitution monies from counties. This was an increase from the previous year.

The collection of restitution and civil awards has been critical for the continued operation of the Reparations Program.

Expenditures

In fiscal year 2004, 3.07 million dollars was distributed in payments to victims or their providers.

The largest category of expenses was medical care which accounted for 45 percent of the payments. This category has grown significantly since 2001 when medical expenses only comprised 35 percent of total costs. This growth resulted from double digit increases in the costs of health care during the past few years.

The second most costly type of expense was economic support which includes lost wages and loss of support to dependents of a deceased victim. Twenty-four percent of the Board's expenses were for economic support.

Funeral expenses and related transportation costs were the third largest category of expenditures at 21 percent.

Mental health care was the least expensive category, comprising only 5 percent of the Board's expenditures.

Other payments, such as crime scene clean-up and accessibility remodeling accounted for 5 percent of expenditures.

Claimant Comment

"I was surprised to hear of the program and the extent of benefits available. I was very glad that they were available. Everyone I spoke to was very kind and helpful."

Type of Expenses

