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## **Improving support for victims of crime**

The Alberta government is ensuring victims of crime have the help they need with a five-point plan that will strengthen support for victims.

An additional \$4.5 million in available money from the Victims of Crime Fund will improve the scope and quality of programs for victims of crime in five key areas. The increase in available funding will go towards police-based victim services units, support for domestic violence survivors, help for victims in court, restorative justice initiatives and expanding outreach services for Indigenous victims.

“Albertans affected by crime deserve to feel supported and respected during an incredibly difficult time. These funds will ensure programs and services can continue to support victims of crime when and where they need it. I commend the staff and volunteers who do this important work day in and day out.”

- Kathleen Ganley, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General

Victim service units work across Alberta supporting victims of crime during police investigations and throughout the criminal justice process. Available funding will nearly double for police-based victim services units in seven municipalities – Edmonton, Calgary, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

“This new funding announcement will have a huge, positive impact on the lives of victims of crime in Alberta. The additional funding for victim service units across the province will afford them the ability to hire additional staff as well as enhance the already indispensable services they currently offer toward supporting victims, survivors and their families. We look forward to continuing to work with our government to grow, maintain and enrich the services delivered to victims of crime in Alberta.”

- Brian Turpin, past president, Alberta Police Based Victim Services Association

“People often have no idea where to go for support or what rights they have when they become victims of crime or tragedy. Victim assistance teams are a vital link that helps people navigate the criminal justice process and connect with the supports they need while they deal with very complex and emotional situations. The funding announced today will help ensure that police agencies across the province can offer this critical service to Albertans when they need it.”

- Roger Chaffin, Chief Constable, Calgary Police Service

“Victim service units do invaluable work across Alberta. I learned this first-hand when my husband was murdered in 2009 in the Crowsnest Pass. After his death, volunteers were there for me. They listened to me through my grief, they picked up their phones day and night to answer my questions about court processes, and they sat beside me during the trial. I don’t know where I would be today, if it wasn’t for their help and guidance.”

- Cindy English, wife of George Steve English

## **Highlights of the plan to strengthen support for crime victims**

### **Funding boost for police-based victim services units**

Additional money will ensure high demand programs in Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo can continue helping Albertans, and enable these assistance teams to provide support to surrounding areas.

### **Support for survivors of domestic violence**

Preventing and addressing family violence is a high priority, and additional funds will be used to enhance province-wide services that address the complex needs of survivors of domestic violence. More information about these initiatives will be available in the coming months.

### **Aiding victims in court**

Dedicated staff and the purchase and upgrade of testimonial aids, such as screens and closed-circuit television upgrades, in courtrooms across the province will help ensure vulnerable victims and witnesses are able to participate in court processes, provide testimony and navigate the justice system with more confidence.

### **Helping Indigenous communities**

Expanding the existing Indigenous Victims Outreach Services program into more communities will increase access to support for Indigenous victims of crime in both urban and rural settings.

### **Creating opportunities for restorative justice**

An increase in grant funding available will help support restorative justice initiatives in communities across the province.

## **Background**

- Funding for police-based victim services units in Edmonton and Calgary will increase from \$300,000 to \$500,000 each in 2018-19 and to \$600,000 for the next three fiscal years.
- Funding for police-based victim services units in Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat will double from \$150,000 to \$300,000 each in 2018-19 and the next three fiscal years.
- Grant funding for the police-based victim services unit in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo was quickly increased to help victims after the Wood Buffalo Region wildfire in 2016. Available funding for the area will increase from \$265,000 to \$300,000 in 2018-19 and the next three fiscal years.

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### **Related information**

Help for victims of crime

## **Media inquiries**

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