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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I am honored to present the annual report of the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board for fiscal year 2015. This report covers the board's activities from July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015.

For 41 years, the Reparations Board has provided critical financial help to victims of violent crime throughout Minnesota. Since its creation in 1974, the board has received applications from more than 43,642 victims. This year, the board provided financial assistance to 1,119 victims.

During fiscal year 2015, the board received 1,276 new applications. In 28 percent of the new applications, the victim was under 18 years old. A majority of the new applications resulted from assaults, child abuse, homicides, impaired driving, sexual assaults and robberies. Also, 30 percent of the new applications received were related to domestic violence.

Throughout the past year, the Reparations Board staff processed payments to victims in need. More than \$2.9 million was paid out for medical and dental care, mental health counseling, funeral and burial expenses, lost wages and loss of support to victims across the state.

During monthly meetings, board members reviewed applications, and made decisions in accordance with the laws and rules governing the board. The board members reviewed 177 applications and heard 38 appeals. Many victims expressed to board members their gratitude for the help they were provided during a very difficult time.

This year's letter is special because this is my last term on the board. It has been an honor to serve for the past 20 years and I believe we have made a significant contribution to improving services for crime victims during that time. It has been a pleasure to work with our very dedicated board members, as well as reparations director Marie Bibus and her experienced staff, to provide an important service to Minnesota crime victims.

Robert Goodell, Chair
Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

History

The first victim compensation programs were created in 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.

The Crime Victims Reparations Act was passed by the Minnesota 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 financial help 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 (DPS-OJP).

Staff members set up incoming claims, gather documentation, approve and deny claims and process payments.

Staff also collect restitution and recover 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 4,500 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) Amy Christiansen, crime victim; Lisa Eder, Hennepin County Attorney's Office; Robert Goodell, Anoka County Attorney's Office; Lt. Kimberly Lund, Minneapolis Police Department; Dr. Steven Kiester (not pictured).

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 2015, the board heard 38 appeals. Of those, 21 were affirmed, 15 were reversed or modified, and two were held over for more information. There were four new requests for administrative hearings. Pre-hearing conferences were held in three cases and one full hearing was held. Orders were granted in favor of the board in all four cases.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Claim Trends

The most notable trend during fiscal year 2015 was a decrease in medical expenses. Medical expenses paid by the board decreased from \$1,085,351 in fiscal year 2014 to \$985,165 in fiscal year 2015.

Another trend was an increase in claims involving domestic violence. Thirty percent of claims received were the result of domestic violence compared with 27 percent during the previous year.

Customer Service

Excellent customer service is a key performance goal. During fiscal year 2015:

- 85 percent of recipients gave the program a service rating of very good or good.
- 95 percent of recipients said they were satisfied with the amount of benefits received.
- 92 percent of respondents indicated that benefits were paid in a timely manner.



Board Member Christiansen

New Board Members

Two new members joined the board in January 2015. Dr. Steven Kiester replaced Dr. Philip Eckman as the board's physician representative. Dr. Kiester has practiced in the Twin Cities for more than 30 years. He has been active in the Aspen/Allina Medical Groups for the past 25 years, and is a past president of the Minnesota Podiatric Medical Association.

Amy Christiansen replaced Ellyn Rapaport as the board's victim representative. Christiansen was the victim of domestic violence in 2010. She is passionate about making a difference in the lives of people who have been impacted by crime.

Increased Collections

Another tremendous outcome this year was an increase in restitution collections. Due to the consistent efforts of the reparations recovery unit, collections were substantially greater in fiscal year 2015.

Total collections increased from \$890,979 in fiscal year 2014 to \$1,195,773 in fiscal year 2015. This was due to a large increase in amounts of unclaimed monies received from the counties.

Outreach Efforts

The board's vision is to ensure that all victims have equal access to information about reparations. Staff and board members distributed information and provided training in various communities throughout Minnesota. During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, staff participated in a Community Resource Fair sponsored by Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio. Information was also distributed through the Department of Public Safety's website and social media.

Claimant Comment

“ I feel fortunate for the assistance I've received from the board and knowledgeable staff. It truly has been a tremendous help to me.”

APPLICATION PROCESS

Intake

The application process begins when the board receives an application 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 reports to determine eligibility.

Payment Process

If the applicant clearly meets eligibility requirements, billing information and other documentation are 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 them.

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 application is forwarded to the board for review. The board meets monthly to review and vote on the eligibility and benefit levels of questionable applications. If an application 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 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 sexual 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.

Claimant Comment

“It was a sad occasion for our family. Staff was very professional. I really appreciated being treated well.”

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

“Very wonderful program. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

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



Board members Goodell, Christiansen and Lund.



Board members Eder, Goodell, Christiansen and Lund.

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. The board staff provide training and information to those professionals who assist crime victims with their claims.

Every year, staff present a reparations training session at the Minnesota Victim Assistance Academy and the statewide crime and victimization conference.

During fiscal year 2015, the reparations staff also responded to training requests from victim services programs. Staff conducted eleven training sessions throughout the state, including Bemidji, Bloomington, Crookston, Grand Rapids, Mankato, Milaca, Minneapolis, St. Cloud and St. Paul.

The reparations program has a variety of brochures, handbooks and posters available. Law enforcement agencies, county attorneys and victim service professionals 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 DPS-OJP website at ojp.dps.mn.gov.

Participant Comments

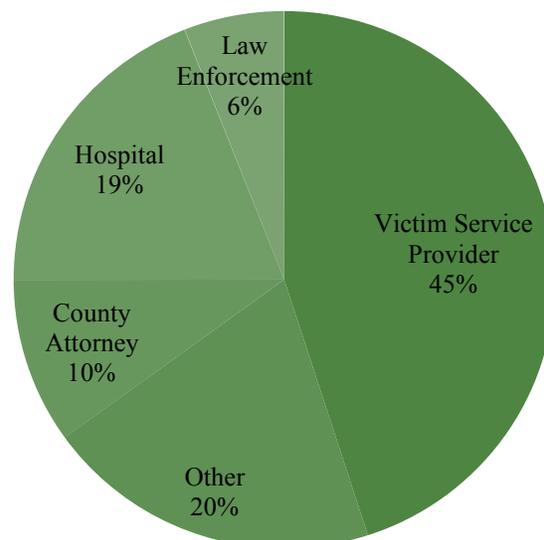
“ It was helpful to learn about this topic in greater detail to know how to further help my clients.”

“ Thank you so much for educating us on such a wonderful resource.”

“ This was my third time hearing about this subject and I learn something new each time.”

Applications by Referral Source

Referral Source	Number of Applications
County Attorney	127
Domestic Abuse Program	56
Funeral Home	35
Hospital	242
Internet Website	19
Other	194
Law Enforcement	74
Probation Agent	9
Sexual Assault Program	47
Victim/Witness Program	473
TOTAL	1,276



CLAIMS RECEIVED

The total number of applications received by the Reparations Board decreased slightly. In fiscal year 2015, the board received 1,276 applications compared with 1,376 in fiscal year 2014.

The majority of applications came from victims in:

- Hennepin County (31 percent),
- Ramsey County (18 percent),
- Dakota County (6 percent),
- Anoka County (5 percent),
- Washington County (4 percent) and
- Olmsted County (2 percent).

Fifty-seven percent of victims were female and 43 percent were male. The percentage of male victims declined from previous years. Applications for victims 17 years old or younger made up 28 percent of all new applications.

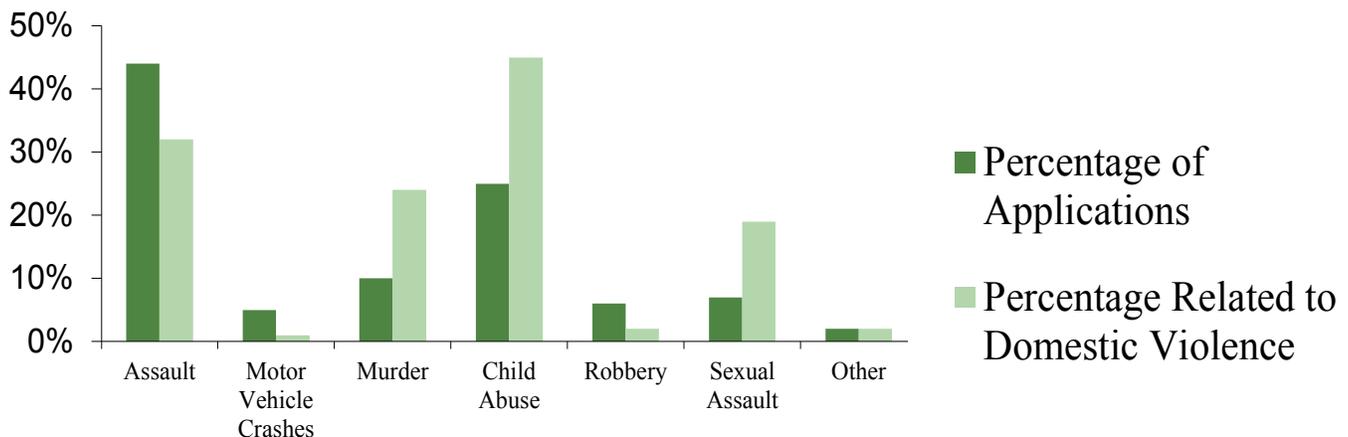
The most prevalent crime categories were assaults (44 percent), child abuse (25 percent), homicides (10 percent), sexual assaults (7 percent), robberies (6 percent), and impaired driving (5 percent). Applications for child abuse, homicides and robberies decreased during this reporting period. Applications for assaults, stalking and arson increased slightly.

Claimant Comment

“Very grateful for the help my daughter will be receiving. Thank you for answering all of our questions. We are thankful for the support.”

Crime Type	Number of Applications
Assault-Felony	461
Kidnapping	3
Child Abuse	316
Sexual Assault	93
TOTAL	1,276

Applications and Percent Related to Domestic Violence



PROGRAM FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

Funding Sources

The Reparations Board receives its funding from a number of sources. The primary source of funding is an appropriation from the state's general fund.

Another significant funding source is an annual U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime grant.

The board also collects special revenue. This revenue includes 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 2015, 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 34 percent of the reparation payments.

The second largest category of expenses was economic support, which included lost wages and survivor benefits to dependents of a deceased victim. Thirty-seven

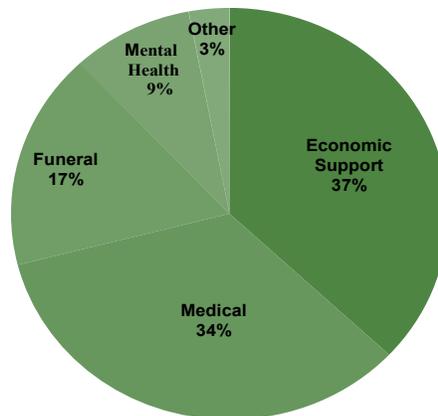
percent of the board's expenses were for economic support.

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

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

Other payments, such as crime scene cleanup and accessibility remodeling, accounted for 3 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 2015, the program recovered \$574,043 in restitution. The program also received \$570,938 in unclaimed restitution monies from counties. In addition, the program recovered \$50,793 from civil awards.

The amount of inmate wages transferred from the Minnesota Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2015 was \$422,726.

Vision for the Future

The board's goal for 2016 is to identify local victim services programs which need more training and technical assistance to ensure reparations information is effectively provided to victims.

The board staff will also continue to participate in regional training sessions on victims rights, reparations and post-conviction victim services.

Claimant Comment

“You were an incredible help to me and my kids.”