



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
EDMUND G BROWN JR., Governor

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State Victim Compensation Board Acts to Increase Benefits for Crime Victims

Sacramento, CA – The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board last Thursday took action to begin implementation of a wide range of benefit changes to help victims of violent crime. The Board endorsed a staff proposal that would increase relocation and funeral benefits, among others and would add coverage for child care and transportation to crime related appointments — routine costs that often hinder victims on their road to recovery.

This action came on the heels of research presented to the Board in June 2015 made possible by the Office for Victims of Crime, 2013 Crime Victim Compensation Program Initiative grant. This research assessed whether the needs of victims were being met through help from CalVCP and analyzed those benefits currently in effect. The proposal to the Board comes just one week after AB 1140 (Bonta) was signed by the Governor, improving access to benefits and eliminating certain eligibility restrictions for victims.

“These are necessary and meaningful benefit changes that will reduce out-of-pocket expenses that our claimants incur and help to reduce the additional trauma and stress they may face,” said Julie Nauman, Executive Officer of the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board. “The data gathered over the last two years identified several unmet needs and barriers to accessing compensation, and I am pleased that the Board wants us to move forward with these changes.”

Specifically, the Board directed CalVCP to pursue the following measures:

- Raise the relocation benefit limit from \$2,000 to \$4,500. The relocation benefit limit has not been modified since its inception in 2000. Victims often relocate for reasons of safety or emotional well-being, yet relocation reimbursement has not kept up with increases in costs for moving and rent.
- Raise the crime scene clean-up benefit limit to \$2,000. This benefit has not been modified since 2002 and the increase will better meet the true costs when clean-up is necessary.
- Raise residential security benefit limit to \$2,000.
- Reimburse child care and transportation expenses that are related to medical, mental health, and other crime-related appointments. There is no current provision in place for

reimbursement of child care expenses. This will reduce barriers that prohibit victims from receiving medical, mental health, and other crime-related services.

- Reimburse lost income when victims attend crime-related appointments and when caretakers miss work to take minor victims to medical, mental health, and other crime-related appointments. This benefit will allow a parent or caretaker to be compensated for time off to take their child(ren) or dependent adult victims to appointments.
- Raise the total award limit from \$63,000 to \$70,000 for both victims and those immediately impacted by the crime, such as a loved one. Due to the raised limits and added benefit types, the total award limit of \$70,000 will ensure victims are able to fully benefit from these changes.
- Reimburse case management services by mental health providers to direct victims. Adding this provision will assist claimants with obtaining needed medical, educational, rehabilitative, and other community services.
- Raise the funeral and burial benefit limit from \$5,000 to \$7,500 and expand covered expenses to include travel expenses of immediate family members to attend the victim's service. Victims often have difficulty meeting funeral and burial expenses under the current benefit limit. This increase addresses that gap to more fully meet the needs of victims.

These changes will be made through a variety of mechanisms including changes to regulations and statutes governing the program. Information will be shared on further developments pertaining to these actions.

"California continues to lead the nation in victim services," Nauman said of the Board, which is celebrating its 50-year anniversary. "We strive to ensure victims of violent crime receive the help they need, and today's action demonstrates the Board's commitment to that goal."

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The California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP) provides compensation for victims of violent crime who are injured or threatened with injury. Among the crimes covered are domestic violence, child abuse, sexual and physical assault, homicide, robbery, and vehicular manslaughter.

If a person meets eligibility criteria, CalVCP will compensate many types of services when the costs are not covered by other sources. Eligible services include medical and dental care, mental health services, income loss, funeral expenses, rehabilitation and relocation. Funding for CalVCP comes from restitution fines and orders, penalty assessments levied on persons convicted of crimes and traffic offenses, and matching federal funds.

For more information about victims' rights and services, visit CalVCP at calvcp.ca.gov.