

Guide to completing a Financial Assistance Application (Funeral Assistance)

The Victims of Crime Commissioner administers the Financial Assistance Scheme to victims of acts of violence committed in the ACT. Financial Assistance can cover your out of pocket expenses for goods and services needed to help you recover from an injury caused by an act of violence.

Please use this guide as you fill out your financial assistance application as it will provide you with information to help you complete the form.

If you have any further questions you can call Victim Support ACT on 1800 822 272 or email fasvsact@act.gov.au.

More information on financial assistance is also available on our website at www.victimsupport.act.gov.au.

Who can apply for financial assistance?

Primary victim - A person who has been injured as a direct result of an act of violence committed on them by another person.

Related victim - A relative of, or person who was in a relationship with, a person who died as a result of an act of violence done by another person.

Homicide Witness - A person who was present when a homicide occurred, or a person who is a witness in a criminal proceeding related to the homicide. This is only available for applications made for acts of violence which have occurred after 1 July 2016.

Funeral Assistance - A person who is expected to pay for or has paid for the funeral of a person who died as a result of a homicide. For acts of violence before 1 July 2016, a person will only be eligible if they are a related victim.

What is an act of violence?

An act of violence is a crime that directly results in the death of or injury to a person. To be eligible for assistance the act of violence must have been committed in the ACT.

The act of violence may be:

- Murder, manslaughter, culpable driving causing death
- Assault offences
- Robbery, aggravated robbery
- Sexual offences
- Domestic violence offences
- Stalking, kidnapping

What scheme do I apply for?

*If the act of violence occurred **on or after 1 July 2016*** - Apply to the Victims of Crime Commissioner using the forms found on the Victim Support ACT website.

*If the act of violence occurred **before 1 July 2016*** – Apply to the Victims of Crime Commissioner using the forms found on the Victim Support ACT website.

The Victims of Crime Commissioner is now the decision maker for **all** applications for financial assistance.

If you have already lodged an application for financial assistance with the ACT Magistrates Court (with assistance from the ACT Government Solicitor) for an act of violence that occurred before 1 July 2016, you will not be able to lodge another application with the Victims of Crime Commissioner for the same act of violence.

Victim Support ACT can assist you in making an application regardless of when the act of violence occurred or when the application is being lodged.

Completing the application form for assistance

If you are applying as a primary victim or on behalf of a primary victim then you should complete the **Primary Victim Application Form**.

If you are applying as a related victim or a homicide witness (only available for acts of violence after 1 July 2016) then you should complete the **Related Victim/Homicide Witness Application Form**.

If you are applying for a funeral assistance payment then you should complete the **Funeral Assistance Application Form**.

All application forms are available on our website at www.victimsupport.act.gov.au or by calling 1800 822 272 / 6205 2066 or emailing fasvsact@act.gov.au to have a form mailed to you.

Completed forms and supporting documentation should be sent to either fasvsact@act.gov.au or to ACT Financial Assistance Scheme, GPO Box 158, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

If you are awarded financial assistance and then receive money from another source will be required to repay the money to the financial assistance scheme.

Completing the Funeral Assistance Application form

A person should complete the Funeral Assistance Application form if they have paid for, or are required to pay for a funeral for a primary victim who died as a result of homicide.

If you are applying for funeral assistance but would also like to claim as a **related victim** or **homicide witness** then you must complete both this form and the **'Related Victims/Homicide Witness Application Form'**.

The total amount that can be claimed as a funeral expense is capped at \$8,000. This amount will not be deducted from any other amount you are eligible for under the scheme, unless the homicide occurred before 1 July 2016.

Step 1. You must indicate whether you have ever received a notice stating that you are required to repay an amount of money to the Financial Assistance Scheme. You may have received this notice as either a recovery notice or a repayment notice.

A **recovery notice** is a notice given to offenders who have been convicted or found guilty of an act of violence where the victim has received financial assistance. The notice seeks to recover some or all of the amount paid to the victim.

A **repayment notice** is a notice given to a person who has been awarded financial assistance and subsequently receives an amount of money from another source that covers the same harm or loss as the financial assistance awarded. The notice seeks to recover some or all of the amount paid to the victim.

If you have received either of these notices and there is still money owing then you must indicate the amount still owing.

SECTION 1 - Details of the person applying for the expense

Section 1 asks for personal information of the person applying for the funeral expense. Section 1 must be completed for the application to be assessed.

It also asks about your relationship to the primary victim. This is particularly relevant for homicides that occur before 1 July 2016 as the legislation requires that only a related victim is eligible for funeral assistance.

SECTION 2 - Details of the homicide

This section asks you to provide information about the homicide. You should provide as much information as possible including the full name of the homicide victim, date of birth, date of the act of violence and the date of death (if it is different to the act of violence). You should also provide information about the place of the act of violence, the name of the investigating police officer and the police reference number (if known).

Please note: A person is not eligible for funeral assistance if they or the primary victim committed the act of violence, conspired with the person who committed the act of violence or was involved in a serious crime at the time of, and which led to, the act of violence. A person is not eligible for funeral assistance if they unreasonably failed to give assistance to police in relation to the act of violence.

You are asked whether anyone was charged with the act of violence and if so to list the name(s) of the offender(s).

SECTION 3 - Details of the funeral expenses

You are first asked to list the funeral expenses you are claiming. These may include;

- fees for the funeral director
- cost of the casket
- embalming
- cost for the funeral home or funeral service

- cost of the grave site
- cost to dig the grave
- cost of a headstone
- cost of cremation

You will be required to provide invoices or receipts for all expenses that you are applying for.

You are then asked whether you have paid for part or all of the expenses upfront. If your claims are granted then the assistance can be provided as reimbursement to you for expenses you have already paid, or to the service provider directly where the expense has not yet been paid.

You must state whether you are, or may be, entitled to receive payment or reimbursement from another source. This may include a fund or money left by the deceased person for the purpose of a funeral. If you answer yes to this then please provide details such as what the source is, how much it covers, and whether the money has been accessed or is due to be accessed.

If you are in financial hardship then you should apply for assistance under the [ACT Funeral Assistance Program](#) before claiming through this scheme.

You are then asked whether the primary victim had funeral insurance. If the answer is yes then you must provide details of who the insurance is through, how much the insurance is for, and whether any of the money has been received.

SECTION 4 - Declaration and agreement to conditions

This section is where you declare that everything that you have provided in the form is true and correct. Your application will not be assessed unless the declaration has been made and the terms and conditions have been agreed to.

You must also sign the form for the assessment to occur. If you are filling in your form online then you must type your name in the text box.

Please note: If you provide any information that you know to be false or misleading on your application form you may be required to repay any money provided to you and could face criminal charges.

By completing this section you are acknowledging that the Victims of Crime Commissioner is authorised to seek and obtain information to verify any of the information you provide and to ask for proof of your identity.

SECTION 5 - Notes

You should use this space to provide any additional information that you were unable to provide anywhere else on the form. You may also attach additional pages if there is insufficient space.