

VIOLENT CRIMES COMPENSATION BOARD

EMERGENCY AWARDS

The State's violent crimes compensation program is funded through both state and federal funds. Approximately 70% of the amount awarded annually in compensation comes from a legislative appropriation of state funds, and 30% comes from federal funds in the form of an annual federal grant.

In FY2009 the VCCB received authorization by the legislature to spend \$510,100 in federal funds, and \$1,233,300 from PFD criminal receipts on awards to victims of crime. (Note these figures exclude monies for the program's operating expenses)

In FY2009 the total amount paid to victims = \$1,701,795, including \$25,547.80 awarded by way of emergency awards.

In FY2010 to date the Board has awarded \$29,699.17 by way of emergency awards.

Note: amounts awarded as emergency funds are deducted from the amount of the final award made to the victim. Should the claim be deemed ineligible, the emergency funds would be required to be repaid. This does not happen in practice since it is only those claims where eligibility already appears to be established where emergency awards can be considered (see Board policy)

Emergency awards are necessary because the Board only meets approximately 5 times a year. Therefore, it can be several weeks or even months before a claim is considered for award. The Board exercises its discretion in determining whether it believes an emergency award is justified, which awards are limited to lost wages, counseling, relocation or security measures.

In FY 2009 emergency awards were made on 22 claims. 10 were for lost wages; 5 for counseling; 6 for relocation and 1 for both lost wages and counseling. The average amount awarded was \$1,161.26, but 12 awards were made at the maximum \$1,500 level.

The maximum amount that may be awarded as an emergency award has not increased since 1975. The main reason for requesting the increase is that rental costs have increased significantly over the years. If someone needs to find a new place to live urgently, whether as a matter of security or for their emotional wellbeing, \$1,500 does not go very far, particularly where a family is involved. Raising the emergency award amount to \$3,500 will enable the board to sufficiently provide for emergency situations.

E.g. we recently relocated a family where the 13 year old daughter had been raped in her bed by a family acquaintance. The family was being harassed by the family of the perpetrator. The Board awarded \$1,500 in emergency funds so that they could relocate as soon as possible for safety and because the little girl was extremely traumatized. The funds paid for the security deposit (\$1,000) and part of one month's rent (\$1,600). At the next Board meeting additional funds were awarded to this family for relocation costs as well as funds for counseling.