

Victim Impact Statement (VIS) Travel Fund Program

Why read a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) in court?

The Criminal Code was amended in 1999 to allow victims to read their VIS at sentencing hearings. It allows victims to participate more directly in the sentencing by reading their own words to explain how the crime has affected them.

What is a sentencing hearing?

A sentencing hearing is to determine the appropriate consequence for someone convicted of a criminal offence.

What funding is available for me if I choose to read my VIS in court?

Eligible expenses include:

- ground and/or air transportation costs
- accommodations up to three days
- meals

Expenses not covered include:

- guest charges to hotel room (i.e.: movies, mini-bar, telephone calls, room service, etc.)
- Lost or stolen property
- Lost wages
- child care
- other expenses not related to travel

Expenses must not exceed \$2,500 per person, for up to three days if required (stays beyond three days require prior approval). *Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement.* Expenses beyond the maximum are the responsibility of the claimant.

For offences involving death, a maximum of two individuals per victimization may receive funding to read a VIS in court. *Pre-authorization is required.*

Can someone come with me?

For children under 16 years, a support person, parent, or guardian may submit a travel expense claim. This person must be 18 years of age or older.

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For serious personal injury offences (such as: an indictable offence involving personal violence, endangerment where sentence may be 10+ years, or sexual assault) both the direct victim and a support person may submit a travel expense claim.

For all other offences, only one victim per victimization may submit a claim.

What needs to be considered?

The crime must have occurred in Nova Scotia, and the sentencing hearing must have occurred after January 1, 2008.

You must attend the sentencing hearing with the intention of reading your VIS in court.

You are to pay for the travel expenses and then must submit the receipts in order to be reimbursed for your costs. In some circumstances, expenses can be pre-paid.

Program assistance will only be provided when no other source of funding is available.

Anything else I need to know?

ALL financial assistance and/or unused tickets that have been provided must be returned if the hearing does not proceed, and is not rescheduled within a three month time period.

You must agree to the terms and conditions of the program, sign, and return forms to Victim Services head office in order to receive funding.

How do I access the funding?

Contact your Local Victim Services office and indicate that you want to read your VIS at the sentencing hearing. Once the proceedings have been scheduled, a Victim Services officer will send you an information package and forms in the mail.

You must make your own travel arrangements according to the terms of the agreement (for example: seek out discount fares when possible).

After the hearing, you must have the expense claim form signed by the Crown Attorney to confirm your attendance. Submit the expense claim form with your attached receipts to the Victim Services head office for approval and processing. Payment will be sent to you in the mail.

We Wish You Well on Your Day in Court

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How Can You Contact Us?

The Provincial Victim Services Program,
Nova Scotia Department of Justice provides information and assistance to victims of crime.
This is a no-cost service.

For more information, contact the Provincial Victim Services Office in your area.

Victim Services Head Office

Tel: (902) 424-3309

Fax: (902) 424-2056

Toll Free 1-888-470-0773

Web site address:

http://novascotia.ca/just/victim_Services/

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Department of Justice
Victims Services