




HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Hamilton Police Services Board
BOARD MEETING DATE:	February 23, 2023
SUBJECT:	Victim Support Grant Update
REPORT NUMBER:	23-017
SUBMITTED BY:	Frank Bergen, Chief of Police
SIGNATURE:	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Victim Services Branch (VSB) of Hamilton Police Service (HPS) was awarded the Victim Support Grant (VSG) through the Ministry of the Solicitor General in October 2021.
- VSG provides funding to police services to enhance capacity to support victims and survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) and human trafficking (HT), through increased collaboration with community agencies.
- For this Grant, VSB partnered with Catholic Family Services, Victoria and Friends (formerly Interval House) and YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford
- VSB has been granted \$200,000 for two years: 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 expiring March 31, 2023.
- Catholic Family Services, Victoria and Friends (formerly Interval House) and YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford will receive \$180,000, 90% of the total funding.
- VSB will retain \$20,000, 10% of the total funding.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The HPS shall be responsible for dispersing grant funds to Catholic Family Services, Victoria and Friends, and YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford following the payment schedule outlined by the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Staffing: N/A

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Mission: To serve and protect in partnership with our communities.

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Legal Implications: Catholic Family Services, Victoria and Friends (Interval House of Hamilton at the time of signing) and YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford have all signed MOUs outlining their involvement with HPS and the Victim Support Grant. The MOU is valid from January 1, 2022 until March 31, 2023.

INFORMATION

In Hamilton, there is a critical need for a multi-sectoral community collaboration to support incidents of IPV and HT. Although Victim assistance is available immediately through Victim Services, there are extensive wait lists for individuals and families to connect with ongoing/long term supports due to high demand in the community. These resources are paramount to enhancing education, support networks, and improving safety for survivors.

In 2021, the Victim Services Branch HPS was awarded the Victim Support Grant through the Province of Ontario: Ministry of the Solicitor General. This Grant provides funding to police services to enhance capacity to support victims and survivors of IPV and HT, through collaboration with local organizations and community agencies. Although the Grant period is for the fiscal years of 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, HPS was informed of its successful application in October 2021, and the first funding installment was received in March 2022. Funding will expire March 31, 2023. At this time, HPS has received three of four payment installments totaling \$150,000.

This Grant has allowed our Service to create the Community Liaison Program (CLP) in partnership with three community agencies: Catholic Family Services, Victoria and Friends, and the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford. The VSB office connects with victim/survivors through referrals from HPS officers/detectives, community agencies, or individuals in the community. Individuals do not need to have reported to police in order to access our services. We are also able to extend supports to both parties in non-criminal domestic disputes.

When the VSB office connects victims/survivors of IPV and/or HT, we work with them to identify their goals and needs. In most cases, those needs include referrals to community agencies for ongoing supports such as counselling, legal advocacy, and transitional housing. The creation of CLP ensures victims/survivors can access these supports much faster.

All three organizations involved with CLP have specialized, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive expertise, and offer streamlined support and education services to victim/survivors of IPV or HT who are referred by HPS and/or the Victim Services Branch. Additionally, all three organizations will assist HPS with education and ongoing training related to IPV and HT.

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HPS has been granted \$200,000.00 over two years to support victims/survivors of IPV and HT.

The largest portion of the grant funding (\$180,000, 90%) will go to three community agencies:

1. Catholic Family Services (\$60,000, 30%) for counselling supports, assistance with housing and employment for men and non-binary individuals who have experienced IPV. Couples counselling is also available for parties who do not have release orders restricting contact.
2. Victoria and Friends (\$60,000, 30%) for Violence Against Women (VAW) services including counselling, legal advocacy, and transitional housing support.
3. YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford (\$60,000, 30%) for survivors/suspected victims of HT. Survivors of HT have been hired as peer support workers for proactive initiatives with the HPS Human Trafficking Unit. These survivors accompany the Human Trafficking Unit during probes to offer support to those who may be looking to exit trafficking. The YMCA also offers ongoing supports to survivors of HT to address needs such as housing, finances, employment, education, etc.

The Victim Services Branch will retain a portion (\$20,000, 10%) of funding to purchase home safety items for survivors of IPV and/or HT to enhance their own personal safety. Although there are provincial programs that can assist with obtaining home safety items, they are subject to eligibility requirements. The Victim Services Branch will provide items such as personal safety alarms, portable locks, and door bars, as well as technology based safety items, to those who are not eligible for other government programs or require additional safety measures due to their level of risk. The addition of these home safety items, in conjunction with other supports such as counselling, and transitional housing support, will provide a more fulsome model of care for the individuals we support. Collaborative working relationships provide the best outcome for the individuals we serve. VSB is committed to working collaboratively with community agencies. We will continue to look for and be receptive to opportunities for community partnerships.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A

FB/R.Cooper

- c: Deputy Chief Ryan Diodati – Operations
Superintendent Marty Schulenberg – Investigative Services Division
Inspector Andrea Torrie – Investigative Services Division
A/Administrator Rachel Cooper – Victim Services Branch

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