

Victim's Assistance and the Louisiana Crime Victims Reparations Fund

The Louisiana Crime Victims Reparations Fund helps innocent victims and their families when they have no other means of paying for the financial cost of a crime. The fund is administered by the Crime Victims Reparations Board under the jurisdiction of the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement. The money in the fund comes from people who break the law. Major Ginny Higgins is the Claim Investigator for St. Martin Parish. If you or someone you know is a victim of a crime that occurred and would like to receive assistance with the Crime Victim Reparations Program or receive further information, please contact Major Ginny Higgins at (337) 394-2725.

The following are the qualifications to apply for Crime Victim's Reparations:

Basic Qualification Requirements:

Residency: The crime must occur in Louisiana or the crime must involve a Louisiana resident who becomes a victim in another state that does not have a crime victim compensation program for which the victim would be eligible.

Reporting the Crime: The crime must be reported to a law enforcement agency within 72 hours after the incident unless there is a good reason why the crime was not reported within this time period.

Filing for Compensation: The application must be filed within a year of the crime unless there is a good reason why the application was not submitted within this time period.

Cooperation: The victim and/or claimant must cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in the investigation and prosecution of the case.

Who May Qualify?

An innocent victim of a violent crime who suffers physical and/or emotional harm or death or catastrophic property loss.

A person who legally assumes the obligations or voluntarily pays certain expenses related to the crime on behalf of the victim.

Immediate family members needing counseling as a result of the consequence of death of the victim

Who is Not Eligible?

A victim whose own behavior contributed to the crime (in those cases, benefits may be reduced or denied).

A victim or claimant who was engaged in illegal activity at the time of crime.

An offender or an accomplice of the offender.

Anyone who as incarcerated in a penal institution when the crime occurred or who had a felony conviction and was serving a sentence or probation in the last five years preceding the crime..

Victims of motor vehicle accidents except those listed under "What Crimes are Covered").

What Crimes Are Covered?

Crimes that involve the use of force or the threat of the use of force and result in personal injury, death or catastrophic property loss.

Only these motor vehicle related crimes: DWI, Hit and Run, victim of a driver who is fleeing apprehension by law enforcement, or a victim whose injuries were intentionally inflicted with a vehicle.

What Expenses are Eligible?

Reimbursement for property damage or loss is not an eligible expense. Approved claims may be awarded compensation for the following only if they are related to the crime:

- Reasonable medical and prescription expenses
- Dental expenses
- Mental health counseling
- Funeral expenses
- Loss of earnings or support
- Child care or dependent
- Crime Scene cleanup (eff. 8/15/2010)
- Reasonable replacement costs for item or items taken as evidence or made unusable as a result of the criminal investigation.

What Expenses are *Not* Eligible:

Expenses which may not be reimbursed for any reason include:

- Property losses *except* for a catastrophic property loss which is limited to the loss of your current residence provided it is owned and occupied by the victim/claimant.
- Pain and Suffering
- Property Repair
- Attorney fees except when they are part of an order from a hearing or award by a court of law.

For more information regarding the Louisiana Crime Victim's Reparation Program www.cole.state.la.us and look under "Our Programs" and click on Crime Victims Reparation.